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BY

FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI

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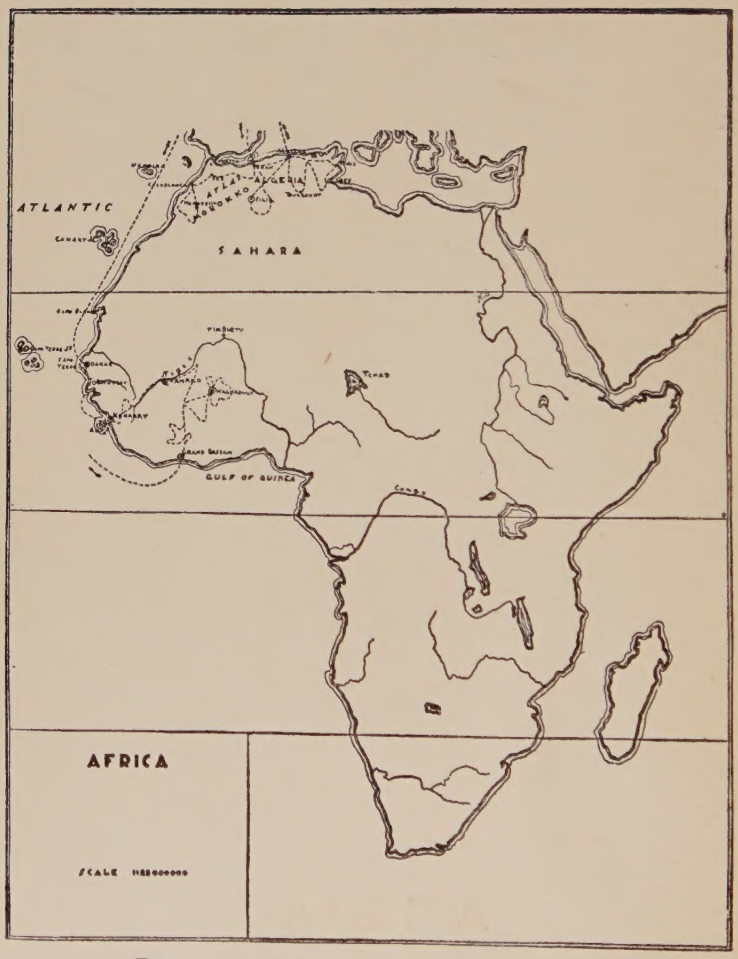

ROUTE OF OSSENDOWSKI'S EXPEDITION

SLAVES OF THE SUN

BY

FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI

Author of "Beasts, Men and Gods," "The Fire of Desert Folk," "Oasis and Simoon," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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To the Memory of

DOROTHY TENNANT, LADY STANLEY,

this Book is Dedicated

by the Author

PREFACE

THE first ideas for this book came to me at an early stage of my journey, when, resting after the toil of a laborious day spent under the scorching Senegalese sun, I thought of the greater hardships so heroically borne by the early explorers of tropical Africa. I resolved then to dedicate my future book to the wife of an illustrious explorer of Africa, to Dorothy Tennant, Lady Stanley, who has honoured me with her friendship and who bestowed on me so much kindly advice before I departed from Europe on my last journey.

I was still at work on the book when I received the sad and unexpected news that Lady Stanley had just died. All that I can do now is to dedicate it to the reverent and tender memory of a great woman, the devoted wife and comrade of Stanley, whose thoughts, cares, joys and strivings she knew and could understand.

And in the books that tell of my wanderings to the distant ends of the earth she found hidden aspirations, a profound love of humanity, and a deep sympathy for the sufferings of the human heart, which equally beats under a white, black or a yellow skin.

Only three weeks before her eyes forever closed in death, Lady Stanley sent me in one of her letters a poem of Musset, full of serene resignation.

Our friendship thus ended with melancholy sadness.

During the last few years Lady Stanley wrote to me many such letters. She was interested in my journeys and my books, in my opinions of men and nations, their psychology and their politics. She shared with me her own individual thoughts, and her last letter, serene like a sunny autumnal day, was full of melancholy and the presentiment of approaching death, though powerful through it all with its faith in the immortality of the human soul.

In one of her letters Lady Stanley remarked to me that the learned doctrinaire will certainly be opposed to the explorer, and will in this way enter into an incongruous union with the most obscure illiterate, who is always the enemy of him who proclaims new and unfamiliar tidings. So, as she added in this very same letter, the learned of the Salamanca University clamoured with an equal zeal for the death of Columbus as did the mob of street-hawkers in Madrid.

Lady Stanley advised me always to try to pacify the learned, and it is to follow that advice that I pen these words.

After the publication of each book of mine there supervenes a kind of restlessness among the learned. I can hear it demanded: Where does the author obtain the material for his observations? Does he describe real facts, or is it all only the imagination of a man of letters?

Would that I were able to appease the men of science, at least so far as this book is concerned.

Most of the authentic documents, rich original material which cannot be subject to doubt or suspicion, were supplied to me by various living beings.

There was my boy, the red-skinned Negro of the Fulah tribe; there were also the wise and mysterious Umaru Bari; the ebonlike Malinki, standard-bearer and commander of my escort; Konan, the Baule tracker of buffaloes and elephants; the charming, delicate, fair-haired Mme. Daresné; the little white boy named Jacquot, with his translucent face; and a black good-for-nothing, the "griot" and storyteller Delimi; the magician, Namara Diadiri; the king, Moro-Naba; the colonial officials, the planters, traders, governors, doctors and officers, and an aged, wordly-wise marabout; the eccentric, pensive Calao, and my chimpanzee "Kaska," whose ancestors immigrated to Africa from accursed and submerged Lemuria and preserved in silence the legends and customs of their ancient country.

All these were my authorities, and they have discovered in the great book of Nature chapters on real Africa very different from any written on paper. It was with an indulgent smile that they, each in his own way, appraised the works of the learned.

Thus my book is not written for those men of science who, reclining in comfort in their northern homes, write learnedly of the flaming sun of the equator or, loathing the touch of their servant's hand, expatiate on the equality of all the human races.

The only authority for my conclusions is life itself and the enrapturing panorama of movements, feelings and thoughts. Such pictures were seen and admired by me everywhere on the ocean and on land, a fact which gives me the courage to express my convictions without heeding

whether their expression may displease the learned or the ignorant, the powerful or the beggar, or whether it incurs applause or condemnation.

FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI.

WARSAW, *April* 1927

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SLAVES OF THE SUN

SLAVES OF THE SUN

CHAPTER ONE

POISON

THE white man grew suddenly aware of the breath of the black continent. He shivered and raised his head, and this inhabitant of teeming towns involuntarily dilated his nostrils. He looked all around him, but could see nothing unusual. For six days now he had been sailing the Atlantic, and during the whole of the six days he had seen continually the same prospect. Low, heavy waves furrowed the surface of the ocean as far as eye could reach; the shifting, broken line of the horizon rising and falling: now straight like a tautened string, now serrated or undulating with billows born somewhere afar, beyond reach of the gaze; coveys of mews floating or darting in the air; white clouds, broken and tousled into shreds by a never-ceasing wind, and bottomless breaches in the midst of them—breaches filled with the azure and green shades of the sky. . . .

All this the white man saw in a moment of incomprehensible disquiet or mysterious foreboding. And yet . . . he heard an almost imperceptible murmur in the air, and drew into his lungs a dry, hot breath.

An animal instinct suddenly awakening in him compelled him to turn towards the east. He stood and endeavoured with his gaze to pierce through the bar of the horizon which concealed the mystery from him: the man accustomed to city streets and gloomy governmental offices, to the ostentatious display of civilization, with its silent, furious struggle of one against all and all against one.

Long he stood and gazed stubbornly, his eyes turned towards the east. An hour or more passed before he discerned a pale yellow belt of land emerging above the horizon.

"The African coast!" shouted a half-naked sailor running past, his hairy chest and arms disfigured with obscene tattooings.

"The African coast!" the white man repeated in a whisper, his eyes fixed on the yellow belt of land as it took on a more and more ruddy tinge. His eyes narrowed, his jaws set more firmly, and his nostrils dilated as he drew in the fiery breath of the unknown land.

"Madam requests you to go to her," sounded the voice of the ship stewardess behind him. He shuddered and hastily left the deck, running below to his cabin. There he found the ship's doctor, who daily visited his sea-sick wife.

"We're doing quite well to-day!" The doctor repeated the remark he had used to every sick passenger for fifteen years.

"I am very glad!" cried the white man. "And do you know, Lucie, I have already seen Africa? But they de-

ceived us abominably! We were told that Africa was a black country, and what I saw was a land all yellow and red!"

He smiled, endeavouring with a jest to cheer up his wife. She smiled back, and gave him her pallid, emaciated hand.

"Ah well! you must expect that!" said the doctor. "The language of civilized people has become a cesspool of the most shameless lying and knavery. For instance, we often hear it declared that Christianity is the mainspring of modern civilization. Christianity! The teaching of Christ. Ha! ha! ha! What rot! What impudence! The Nazarene's teaching is a philosophy of love almost cosmic, and meantime Christian Europe, America, Australia and Asia are like a Roman arena, where blood, bloody sweat, bloody tears flow into subterranean cisterns and collect in a great lake of revenge. White Europe! But I say bloody, ruddy Europe! Damn it all! the human language is an anthology of absurd paradoxes."

The white man stared at the doctor in amazement. The ship's Aesculapius had hitherto been distinguished by his taciturnity, an extremely good appetite, intelligence in his choice of wines, weak medical knowledge, and platitudinous maxims as well worn as the green baize of card-tables.

The white man now observed the doctor attentively, and at once noticed the tired, faded pupils, the puckers of skin around the eyes and mouth, the grizzled hair and thin, inflexible lips. Everybody on the ship knew that the doctor had been sailing with it for fifteen years.

"This man no longer expects anything of life," thought

the white man, while the doctor, bending over the sick woman, said in a cheery tone:

"Well now, madam—more ice, lemon, a cold compress on the head, and think yourself into believing that you're not sailing on our *Shark,* but are dancing a waltz, somewhat too dizzily at times!"

Madam Lucie smiled forcedly, pressing her hand to her forehead. The doctor burst into loud and unexpected laughter, squeezed the husband's hand and went out. The white man was left alone with his wife. He sat down on a stool at her feet stretched out motionless on the narrow bed, and fixed his eyes on her pale face, with its sunken eyes closed with blue, heavy eyelids on the bloodless, immobile lips, on the thin fingers pressed against the forehead.

"Poor little one!" he whispered softly. "My poor, dear little one!" But the suffering woman made no answer, and probably she did not hear him.

Then the white man rested his head on his hands and fell into a profound reverie, such as sometimes comes over a man in remote places or at moments of enforced inactivity.

A panorama of pictures from his life passed before his eyes. The son of a minor tax official, he had with difficulty finished his course at the colonial school. Why a colonial school no one knew, not even he himself. To go to the colonies—what nonsense! Surely he could live in France, where there is room enough for everyone! He obtained a post with his father in the Inland Revenue Department, and—managed to exist. Until he was forty he had remained a bachelor, so his small salary sufficed for his

needs. Sometimes things were worse, sometimes better, but he managed somehow. But the moment came in which every man, driven by instinct, strives to establish his own family. It was the manifestation of an irresistible impulse, more powerful than mind and will. He began to look around and consider, but first of all he had to improve his position. He was now too old to have any hope of a career in France, and in the colonies there is always a shortage of men for the positions to be filled. He had some connections, and so after a couple of months he had been offered a small administrative post somewhere in North Guinea. With some difficulty he found the place on the map of Africa; he saw a river, certain mountains, the name of some native tribe, and nothing more. Yet he accepted the post, for it guaranteed him a salary three times as large as the one he received at home in Orleans. Now he could take a wife. That also was easily managed.

Life had provided a host of parents who regarded an affluent husband or a well-dowered wife as the height of happiness for their children. Such parents were the Anselms. Their daughter, a girl not yet eighteen years old, pale, delicate Lucie, soon became his wife. When in the church the bridegroom looked at the pale little face and the sad, yellow-brown eyes of the small, frail girl, her carefully coiffured but scanty muddy-gold little curls peeping out from under her wedding garland, the thin, fine fingers holding the traditional bouquet—his mind, the mind of a man of forty, was involuntarily seized with misgiving. But it was too late then. Congratulations, good wishes, kisses, tears, superficial jokes. . . .

Now the white man and his wife were travelling to

Africa, to North Guinea, to that distant, tiny spot on the earthly globe where there was a river and certain mountains, and where were settled black men belonging to an unknown tribe with an odd outlandish name.

"We shall see!" said the white man to himself. "We shall see! I love Lucie, and my love will bind her to me. We shall see! Everything will arrange itself. We shall be comfortably off, and that is something." And with this thought the European endeavoured to dispel the doubts that were troubling him.

Only on the ninth day did the ship put into the port of Konakry. After a visit to the governor and a short rest in the hotel, M. Richard (as the author of this narrative will call the white man) set out with his wife for the outpost to which he had been assigned. In those days the railway did not yet traverse Guinea from the ocean to the little town of Kankan, whence the French have now driven railroads through the jungle towards the Sudan and the picturesque Ivory Coast. There was no railway then, so the newcomers, accompanied by forty-five black porters, made their way only slowly towards the east. The Negroes carried the baggage and the passenger hammocks on their heads. At the little village of Kindia the travellers' caravan abruptly changed its course and dragged on towards the north.

Twenty-one days this journey lasted. The black porters changed, the landscape changed, the type of inhabitants and villages met with changed, but in the same hammocks remained the same travellers, growing more and more pale, exhausted and ill. The sun poured down on them cascades of burning, murderous rays with elemental fury;

the reddish-yellow earth and the yellow, parched vegetation wearied the sight and caused a severe inflammation of the eyes; black and red ants bit the newcomers furiously both day and night; in the dirty native huts where they spent the nights they were plagued by painfully stinging mosquitoes; in the hills the flaming days were followed by cold, almost freezing nights, when the travellers shivered under their light rugs; then on the plain the nights grew hotter and more stifling than the days; when crossing rivers the white people had not a moment of peace from the horse-flies and flies which attacked and bit them until the blood came. It was a road of torture unspeakable, a journey of such agony that at times they would ask each other the despairing question:

"Why do the whites come here to this terrible country, so hostile and alien?"

Yet it was a vacuous, unnecessary question, for the Richards knew quite well, and in his parting speech the governor had particularly emphasized the fact that Europe would soon be suffering a shortage of provisions and necessities, while war would call for regiments of black soldiers. So in almost every State the Governments were penetrating deeper and farther into countries foreign to them; they were endeavouring to imbue the coloured peoples with their thoughts and plans, and to draw them into common labour for something which hitherto the black, yellow and red tribes had failed to understand.

Despite torments of body and soul, the travellers made their way farther and farther towards the north. Soon they left behind them the last, lowest foothills of the mountain chain. The caravan now traversed a road cut

through the jungle, which lurked and menaced in expectation of the moment when after the first deluge of rain it would be able to swallow up this bare band of earth, so like the scar of a wound inflicted by the hand of man—the enemy.

One day the French-speaking Negro guide pointed to a ribbon of river glittering in the distance and exclaimed:

"That is the Kuluntu! We are barely two days from Yukunkun now."

And at the decline of the second day the caravan approached the great settlement. In the distance the Richards could see the national flag waving over a building surrounded by tall, dark trees.

"The Residence!" the obliging guide explained, pointing to the fluttering tricolour.

M. Richard was just going to ask about the condition of his future abode, but at that moment the inhabitants of the settlement appeared in a great crowd at a turn of the path, with the local petty king and the government interpreter, a Negro official, pacing gravely at their head. There were salutations and then songs, dances, clapping of hands, and a deafening and penetrating music. Amid clouds of dust and a seething mass of people the new administrator finally reached his house.

"I hope you will be happy here," was all he was able to whisper to his wife, for the interpreter drew him on to the verandah, where the people were to make him gifts. When the ceremony was ended M. Richard ordered the natives to return home, announced that his administration would begin from the following morning, and re-entered his residence.

With his wife he went over the whole building. It was not large, but it was comfortable and well-shaded. Mme. Lucie at once set to work to arrange their new nest with the love which is the mark of gentle but secretly active natures. Much time was taken in a stubborn struggle with the white ants harbouring under the sideboard and with the great crab-like spiders. The night, spent under a muslin net hanging down from the ceiling over the bed, passed quietly.

The next morning the normal life of white people began, and the days flowed past slowly, monotonously and without incident, without sorrow or gladness; until one day, about a year after their arrival in Yukunkun, their black woman slave, Melita, ran to M. Richard's office, coming to a halt on the threshold.

M. Richard glanced at her. So many times had he seen her, half-naked, mysterious, black as an agate, as adroit as a "Caryatid" or Negress slave in pictures of ancient Rome or Egypt; but now in her black, abysmal eyes he noticed something unusual. They had an expression of exultant gladness, yet her lips seemed to be quivering with restrained tears.

"What is the matter, Melita?" the administrator asked.

"O! O! O!" the Negress began to wail. "The lady, our good lady, is dead. . . . O! O!"

M. Richard pushed the girl aside and rushed to his wife's room. He cried out with fear, for he saw Lucie lying pale and motionless on her back on the floor. He knelt down and bent over her, and soon realized that she had fainted. He succeeded in bringing her back to consciousness, and carried her to the bed.

Lucie was very weak, and for a long time was unable to speak. Finally she said: "What can it be, Louis? I suddenly felt all my strength go, my head swam, and I fell. . . ."

"I don't know," whispered her husband. "We must wait for other symptoms. . . ."

The same evening the sick woman began to burn and toss in a high fever, and M. Richard had to undertake the cure of his wife's mysterious ailment.

The inhabitants of European cities know nothing of the life of these pioneers of Christian civilization and "European culture" in the African colonies. Nothing! And yet their existence in this inimical, murderous climate is worthy of admiration and profound sympathy.

The man in charge of Yukunkun, M. Richard, was one of many such "culture-carriers." He was, and in any case he had to be, Jack-of-all-trades. He was judge, and judged not only according to the laws of France, but also according to the canons of Islam and the traditional law of the Badiaranka, Bassari, Konyagi, Tiapi, Fulakunda and the other Negro tribes around him; for the purpose of meting out justice he was invested with power to throw people into prison in Yukunkun and even to send them to the "galleys"; he also had the oversight of agricultural matters, cattle-raising and home crafts; he was the chief link between the life of the "savage" inhabitants of his district and the highly cultured society of Europe; he was counsellor in all questions touching the life of the black tribes; he was the authority conferring the fruits of an advanced civilization and demanding the taxes fixed by law; finally, he was physician; and to that end the govern-

ment provided him with an old medical handbook and a small medicine chest, in which there was hardly anything except quinine, epsom salts, castor oil, iodine, aspirin and ammonia, and, of course, cotton-wool and bandages.

For a time M. Richard abandoned all office business, devoted himself to study of the medical handbook, and applied this or that remedy in the struggle with his wife's incomprehensible illness. But nothing availed, for probably it was no definite disease, but simply the dying of a fresh-water fish suddenly thrown into a bay of the sea, or the slow death of a frail pine transferred to the blazing plain of Guinea. Golden-haired Lucie died because in Yukunkun she was unable to live; for the sun and the heat of the atmosphere drank up almost all her blood, and the remainder was poisoned with the venom of mosquitoes, horse-flies, spiders and the microscopic life which breeds in the food and water.

The administrator fretted and raged with pain and despair; but to no one could he confide his anxieties, with no one could he take counsel, for two weeks of terrible travelling separated him from the residence of the nearest doctor. The Negro interpreter and black Melita silently and inquiringly gazed at the adminstrator, endlessly buried in the yellowing, mildewy pages of the handbook, or sitting all night by the sick woman's bed and gazing at her face as it turned paler and paler.

One day M. Richard called the interpreter, and handing him a letter, said: "Send a messenger immediately to Kumbia for a doctor! Tell him to be as quick as possible!" The order was immediately executed.

The day after the messenger's departure, the adminis-

trator heard a movement in his wife's room. He went in and saw the sick woman lifting her frail hands to her eyes with a monotonous movement, and then drawing them down over the breast, as though removing something invisible and unpleasant from her body. Her lips, too, were puckered and her eyelids closed tightly.

"What is the matter, Lucie?" Richard asked, bending over the sick woman's emaciated face.

Lucie made an effort as though to open her eyes or say something, but it was the last effort of her life. She only shuddered, her hands grew still, and immediately the pale, yellow fingers stiffened. The white man's wife was dead.

The administrator did not seem to realize what had happened. Melita slipped into the bedroom unobserved, and saw M. Richard smiling stroking the immobile face of his wife. The Negress at once perceived the yellow shadows lurking around the sunken eyes and in the deep furrows on the forehead; she observed the stiff, contracted fingers, and understood the meaning of the strange calm and dignity shed over the face of the recumbent woman. She made her way from the room, and running out of the house, began to mutter an exorcism, holding in her hand the amulet hanging at her breast. After a while she ran to the interpreter's hut and cried in a shrill voice:

"The white woman has gone away for ever! She will never return to the master again!"

"How do you know?" the Negro asked curtly.

"I saw her myself," whispered the girl. "Her soul has already flown to the tree of her ancestors."

The Negro drew on a linen burnous and left the hut.

He approached the verandah of the residence and sat down on the steps, listening. He sat on a long time, till he heard a muffled, frenzied roar and the heavy fall of a body to the ground. Then all was silent, and only the piercing hissing of a bat rang through the evening air. The Negro removed his shoes and crept towards the door. He opened it without a sound, and then drew back, ran down the stairs and shouted for Melita.

The Negress appeared immediately at the door of the kitchen.

"Come!" commanded the interpreter.

They entered the room. Night had now fallen, so the Negro lit the lamp standing on the toilet table. Then they both stood gripped with terror, for they saw the administrator lying in a swoon and clasping the body of his dead wife in his embrace. With great difficulty they freed the body from the immobile arms of the unconscious man, carried him to a couch, and laid the dead woman back on the bed.

M. Richard quickly returned to consciousness. He was pale, but calm. He sat down again by his wife and gazed silently at her, resting his hands on his knees in an expectant attitude. So he remained seated the whole night and all the following day, until after sunset he began to talk with someone.

"Good! good!" he said, filling the souls of the interpreter and servant with terror. "Good! I will do as you wish, only never leave me, and come every day when the heat is not so great—before sunrise and after sunset. Then everything will be well. . . . Everything will be as before. . . . Good! good! I am going now. . . ."

The administrator arose, and observing the interpreter he asked: "Tell me, where are the carpenter's tools kept?"

"In the stores, box No. 6," answered the astonished and terrified Negro.

"Show me!" the administrator ordered.

In the stores he selected a saw, a plane, gimlet, hammer and several large nails, and told the interpreter to bring some boards. Then M. Richard betook himself to a heavy labour, one unknown to him in Orleans. He had to make a coffin for his wife. He worked all night, injured his hands more than once, the perspiration streamed down from his forehead, but in the early morning the misshapen, crooked box was completely finished. There still remained several supplementary tasks. He painted a large cross with ink on the lid, and at the narrow end of the coffin he carefully wrote the Christian name and surname of the deceased and the years of birth and death; he embellished the inside with a lining of green blotting-paper, then put in a thick layer of dry grass, covered it with a clean sheet and set a little pillow at the head.

After he had finished the coffin he said to Melita: "Our lady was good to you, Melita, wasn't she?"

"Oh yes, sir!" the Negress answered, trembling with fright.

"I am glad you agree, Melita!" M. Richard smiled. "So I want to ask you something. Go to the jungle, gather a quantity of fresh green carité leaves, cut all the roses in the garden, and make many, many wreaths for your mistress. Your mistress loves flowers—loves them very much! . . ."

Melita ran out of the room. The administrator re-

mained alone with his dead wife. But he did not look at her; he sat down in the arm-chair by the bed and gazed at the reflection of himself in the mirror standing on the toilet table. After a moment he smiled joyously, and in a voice quivering with agitation he whispered:

"You have come! So you will not leave me? Never? Never? Always here twice a day? I have done everything you ordered. . . . You will have roses and wreaths that are green and full of the spring. I shall put the body into the coffin myself, I shall dig the grave myself, and let down into it that which is transient and unnecessary to happiness and life. But you will remain with me here forever!"

The administrator abruptly began to laugh softly and protractedly.

"Ha! ha! ha! Now the end! We are immortal. You and I . . . we shall remain together till the end of all things. Joined with you after life, I shall have no perception of death. Instead of seeing you in the glass of the mirror and hearing your voice, I shall simply take your hand and we shall go together towards eternity, for then nothing will tie us to the earth and the body. . . . No? But you see . . . you see!"

Long M. Richard talked with his wife, and at midnight with his own hands he washed and laid out the body and put it in the coffin; then taking a pick and an iron spade he went to the garden, where tall mango-trees and wide-spreading acacias grew.

Again M. Richard laboured the whole night, preparing a place for the last repose of the dead. When the first gleams of the rising sun were turning the high-floating

clouds rosy, the administrator returned to the house, hastily washed himself and changed his clothes. When he had finished he approached the mirror, and smiling serenely, whispered:

"Good morning, little Lucie! It's all ready, yes! Be patient."

Then with uncommon strength he raised the coffin, and bearing it on his shoulders he carried it slowly and carefully towards the door, descended the steps and carried the remains to the acacias and the dark-green mango-trees.

M. Richard laboured long over the lowering of the coffin into the hole. Finally he worked out an elaborate plan for manipulating the ropes, and at the moment when Yukunkun and the neighbouring jungle began to swim in the flood of sunlight Richard was throwing roses down on to the coffin in the grave. Then without any agitation he filled in the pit, covered the mound with wreaths, and set up a small white cross. During these mournful tasks not for one moment did he realize that he had hidden in the earth the visible body of the beloved woman.

Smiling and calm he returned to the house. On the verandah he noticed Melita. Involuntarily he came to a halt, and his gaze rested on the Negress; for never before had he seen this active, disciplined and intelligent girl thus.

She was sitting completely naked, and the sun glittered and raged passionately over the bronze young oil-anointed body; it pried and penetrated wherever a shadow was hidden, as though it sought to tear away the veil from the

mystery of that beautiful form. Melita was squatting motionless with her hands resting on her knees like an exquisite agate image of a fetish "gre-gre"; her straining breasts, like ripened fruit ready to burst beneath the pressure of ripe juices, passionately and shamelessly entreated and menaced; her black, filmy eyes gazed imploringly from under her drooping, blue-painted eyelids; the lips, parted and glaring with henna, revealed a row of gleaming, tigerish teeth. . . .

She was not like a living creature, but rather a marvellous vase carved in the form of a naked woman and crowned with a bunch of scarlet flowers. As though to heighten the resemblance, Melita had wound a scarlet cloth around her head in a knot of fantastic, almost disquieting, insolent shapes. Her figure recalled a sculpture by some obscure Brahman *devadassi* from Angkor-Tom, yet not that of a heavenly Apsaras, but a mistress of the cruel Siva the Destroyer, a nymph of orgy and sin.

After a moment the administrator stepped past the girl.

"I thank you for the wreaths and roses," he flung at her in a low tone.

She answered nothing; but when he had gone into the house her eyes flashed, her fists clenched, and her teeth gnashed like steel on crystal. She went away lingeringly, slow in her movements, bathed in the golden fluid of the sun.

Barely two days later the administrator was at work as usual in his office, judging, counselling, teaching and healing; but outside his office hours he saw no one, and

never visited the grave of the dead. Only once, meeting Melita carrying a wreath and a bunch of red flowers, he asked:

"Where are you going?"

"I want to put these flowers on the grave of our good mistress," she answered.

"I thank you!" he said, gently putting his arm around the shoulders of the girl.

"O! O!" Melita burst out, clinging to him with her whole body.

"Go now—go!" Richard muttered. "Again I thank you."

He went on without a look back, sunk in thought and indifferent.

Twice every day, at sunrise and immediately after sunset, the interpreter and Melita listened at the door. His eyes fixed on the smooth surface of the mirror, the administrator carried on long conversations with his dead wife; for he saw her with the eyes of his spirit. He grieved, wept, occasionally took counsel with her, unbosomed himself to her, and even laughed gaily like a merry child.

The doctor arrived a month after Mme. Lucie's death. He was not at all surprised that the sick woman had died, for, as he put it, "chimpanzees and Negresses die in Europe, white women do the same in Africa."

Lighting a pipe, the doctor lolled back in his arm-chair and drawled through his teeth: "I'm hungry. . . . Have you a good cook? . . . That's the one consolation here. And wine? That's good! that's capital! And cognac?

Cognac and whisky? Why, it will be a Lucullus' banquet! Well, but are you feeling all right?"

M. Richard told him that he did not sleep at night, that after office hours he went about in a stupor. He told of his conversations with his wife, and even divulged his own opinion of such phenomena.

"It is á form of telepathic vision, doctor; I would say more—it is a materialization of telepathic influence. . . . It arises only out of a great yearning and great human effort. . . ."

"Effort?" the doctor repeated. "In what way?"

"Effort to keep myself from committing suicide, doctor!" the administrator answered calmly.

The doctor thought a moment and muttered: "Truly that is not so very stupid. . . . But . . . excuse me . . . what exactly does keep you from committing suicide?"

The administrator's head drooped, and his eyes filled with tears

"She doesn't wish it—nor do I, for then we should never be united," he whispered, as though confiding a secret.

"Why 'never,' if you hold that reunion is possible in other circumstances?" asked the doctor, whose curiosity was aroused.

"Because a suicide who brutally breaks one of the threads of universal life kills his own soul; he arrogantly extinguishes the tiny spark which after death flies back to the general central fire: the flaming, illumining soul of the world, in which are born and whither return the elements and possibly the substance of individual beings."

M. Richard had obviously exhausted himself in finding words for a thought he had long since fully apprehended.

"Hm! hm!" the doctor muttered. "That is not just ordinary hallucination! But I wouldn't advise you to get too absorbed in these problems!"

He smiled forcedly and exclaimed: "Shall we be having dinner soon?"

The cook entered at that very moment, and with the boy's assistance handed them a tray of bottles and a stone pitcher of water.

"Ah this is better than philosophy and telepathy!" cried the doctor jovially.

In the company of the educated white man M. Richard felt much better. He could talk, and speech—that makeshift for the reproduction of thoughts and feelings—mollified his fresh wound like balm. A peace he had not felt for a long time entered his mind and soul. He talked and talked endlessly of everything that had been, that was now, and that would be in the future. He talked consumed by a hunger for words; for he had been deprived of this human right and need for a long time, being unable to talk intelligently with the Negro interpreter of the native servants and his three black soldiers.

The doctor, a man with an expert knowledge of colonials, listened calmly, while seeing to it that the glasses were not left empty. They drank a good deal during dinner and with their coffee. For the first time since the death of his wife M. Richard did not talk with her shade that day, for he dropped into a deep sleep.

While drinking black coffee with cognac after supper, the doctor said: "But you will develop into an inveterate

colonial! Just like me! We shall never tear ourselves away from here to go anywhere else now!"

"Why do you think so?" Richard asked.

"Great yearning and great human effort, as you so excellently put it, will see to that," the doctor answered.

"Have you known a great yearning too?"

For a moment the doctor was lost in thought, but then he muttered:

"The Bambara Negroes say that 'each best knows the worms that nest in his bed,' which means that every man has his own sorrow which gnaws at him."

"Yes," sighed M. Richard. "That's true!"

"So we'll drink a cognac!" the doctor proposed. "We shall meet more than once yet in Africa. They toss me from one end to the other, and they'll shift you about too, so we shall meet somewhere infallibly! . . ."

"Do you like the colonies, doctor?" the administrator asked abruptly.

"Why not? Just like a roach dropped into melted butter in a pan," the doctor jested, pulling at his pipe.

"Then why did you . . ." Richard began.

"Because, my dear sir," the doctor answered, "there is no other place for me on the terrestrial ball. That's why, and only that. For where shall I find such earnings, such comfort, such a cook, such boys, or slaves rather, such young mistresses, humble and devoted—so long as I can pay them—and peace and such little labour for so many benefits? Where else shall I find all this—I, Doctor Olivier, with ruined lungs, a spleen eaten up with malaria, and with a swollen liver, with a diseased heart, with a whole arsenal of possible and impossible ailments, and

with the psychology of a slave-owner, with the habits of a savage European, a hundred times more savage than the local cannibals? Where? Tell me where?"

He burst up from his arm-chair and shook Richard by the shoulder.

"I don't know," answered the administrator, amazed at this outburst.

"But I know!" Doctor Olivier shouted in a piercingly shrill voice. "Nowhere! D'you hear? Nowhere! And that's why I have young, black mistresses, whom I change every three months because they grow old too quickly. these . . . black roses; that's why I smoke opium and hashish; that's why I drink so much and so frequently, for in my view drink assists my weak heart and rotten lungs, spleen and liver, and pours life into my brain. I advise you to follow my example in future, and at the moment get as quickly as possible to bed and sleep . . . sleep! D'you hear? The gammier[1] has already begun its stupid and tedious song. That means midnight is past, and with it the hour of apparitions and spirits; but the time of love rhapsodies is approaching instead. And that Melita of yours—a beautiful little morsel! A narcissus of sin carved from agate. . . . You're a wise lad! You've discovered an extra special for yourself! Oh fie! fie!"

The doctor thrust his fist into the administrator's side and staggered off to his own room. This white man had brought the habits, customs and lusts of civilized people to the solitary residence in Yukunkun, just as lepers carry the infection of their terrible disease.

Left alone, M. Richard emptied a glass of cognac, and

[1] Gammier—a night bird, emitting a series of notes like a gamut.

with a cigar between his teeth went into his bedroom. By his bed Melita was kneeling and strewing flowers over the pillow. The administrator blew out the lamp and went towards the girl, seeking her hands in the darkness. . . .

Melita left her master's bedroom at early dawn, but before she went out she busied herself a moment in the room. Suddenly the sleeping administrator shivered, hearing the jingle of broken glass.

He lifted his heavy head and asked:

"What the devil is that?"

"Forgive me, forgive me, dear master! Let the good master give orders for Melita to be punished! Melita, the bad girl, has smashed the master's mirror and the two decanters on the toilet table. Melita ought to be punished!"

"Go away—go!" Richard said, and fell asleep again.

In this peculiar fashion the memory of his wife, the great yearning, the great human effort and the flaming spark of the universe burning in the soul of M. Richard quickly vanished.

But there remained wines, cognac, liqueurs, occasionally opium and hashish in those days when some still unstifled murky thoughts returned, and first of all Melita, always humbly passionate, always meekly desirous; drinking up Medusa-like his hot blood and burning, excited thoughts to the last drops throughout the night, departing in the early morning without even a look back at the helpless, exhausted, wine and lust-intoxicated body of her master and lover. And so day after day, week after week, month after month. When this Melita went another came; for these black agate flowers withered quickly, and they could

be changed for others as easily as one changes a horse or a dog.

Nevertheless, the black mistresses accomplished their task. M. Richard became an inveterate colonial, and after some years in the African administrative hierarchy rose to a high position. In certain circumstances officials of this now disappearing type were indispensable and useful for colonial purposes, but generally speaking they were an element most injurious and dangerous to the influence and prestige of the white race of Africa, surrounded as they were with the hatred and contempt of the natives. Frequently the Negro petty kings and Syrian merchants influenced their activities with gifts, adulation and money, thus struggling cunningly yet with all the dignity of a noble tribal genius against the policy of the central government.

The administrator of Yukunkun was changed several times, the little white cross on the grave of Mme. Lucie disappeared, and instead the acacias dropped fresh scions; but M. Richard lived on long after, being transferred from one colony to another. With him went two black wives, two dissolute and deceitful sisters who were cynically unfaithful to him with the boys, interpreters and soldiers, but flattered their old master with adulation, and forced on him ideas suggested by the petty kings and Negro magicians.

So the yellowish-red earth of the black people kills the white colonists. It curdles the blood of some among them with the blazing venom of the sun or with the deadly poison of the vegetation and the virus of tropical diseases; it destroys the will and soul of others by causing the out-

break of their lowest instincts: exciting and inflaming them with the teeming earth, with lust and procreative forces, with passionate frenzies, with frail Melitas, "flowers of sin," black poisonous narcissi carved from agate.

With these words the old Sudanese merchant travelling with us from Bordeaux to Dakar brought his story to an end, at the very moment when to port of the Dutch steamship *Kilstroom* we had our first sight of the flat, reddish-yellow coast of Mauritania beyond Capo Blanco. Thus tropical Africa greeted us with this extremely sombre and poisonous story about a white man.

What will this strip of the black continent reveal when we are surrounded by the under growth of the jungle and its mysterious and inscrutable inhabitants?

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE ATLANTIC

OUR *Kilstroom* took ten days to sail from Bordeaux to Dakar. Immediately we had left the Garonne the Atlantic began unpleasantly to rock the black hull of the vessel, which was loaded to the very deck. Time after time the waves broke over us and penetrated even to the engine-room. But when we had passed the coast of Spain and Portugal and had sailed south of Gibraltar, the Atlantic grew calm, as our gallant captain—Jan Soeters, master of the *Kilstroom*—had solemnly assured us it would before we left Bordeaux.

From time to time we passed cargo and passenger vessels, some sailing from Africa, others going to South America or the United States. On the horizon we occasionally saw fishing trawlers steaming, dragging their enormous nets. Lifeless during the day, the ocean grew animated only at night, when along the sides of our vessel and on the crests of the waves the tiny noctilucae gleamed and flamed. Then in the black abyss we could imagine the teeming life of the ocean depths. We saw fish swimming and struggling for existence. No, we did not see them, but we guessed their movements and their course; for although imperceptible themselves they left behind them a fleeting, glittering trail, like bands or spots of phos-

phorescent water. Just like human beings—those invisible, minute organisms of the universe, who call themselves "the lords of Nature," the crown of the creative power of God or Nature—leave behind them similar gleams, similar mysterious little sparks in the ocean of the cosmos. . . .

Beyond Gibraltar, and especially when we had passed the powerful lighthouse standing on the promontory of one of the Canary Islands, the sea grew suddenly calm, and at once provided us with an unbroken thread of incident and amusement.

During the day we were diverted by shoals of flying-fish; they would leap out of the water, and spreading long, broad fins, would fly more than a dozen yards, striking against the crests of the flat, gentle waves. At first glance it might seem that it was a game, the frolics of the sea's graceful inhabitants. But their over-violent, sometimes quite convulsive movements, and especially their benumbed, mobile, terror-stricken eyes, witnessed to the fact that something menacing was pursuing them in the depths of the ocean. That "something" always rose sooner or later to the surface. Sometimes it would be porpoises and dolphins (*Phocaena communis* and *Delphinus delphis*), and several times we saw whales, or so the sailors declared. But so far as I could judge with the aid of my Zeiss binoculars, I think that they were rather pilot whales (*Globicephalus melas*) belonging to the same order, which during winter sometimes make their way from the Arctic Sea to the latitude of Gibraltar, where I saw these handsome specimens.

We were particularly diverted by the common small dolphins, with long serrated beaks. They overtook and

passed our vessel, swam under it, made off swiftly, and then ardently pursued it again. At times they leapt out of the water to a height of over two yards, and then right under the white belly of the female we could see little dolphins swimming, and with astonishing cleverness executing the same movements, turns, and leaps as their mother.

The ardour and passion with which the dolphins pursued the swimming shoals of fish confirmed the possibility of cases observed by certain travellers, when in the fervour of a furious pursuit these fish have sometimes flung themselves on to sandbanks or coastal reefs, where they have perished, attacked by man or birds of prey. The swiftness, versatility and endurance of the dolphins are simply astonishing, and instinct teaches them certain systems of hunting, for they most definitely organize the chase and conduct of swimming shoals of fish in the desired and duly indicated direction. Every time we met with two schools of dolphins we perceived long bands of tiny waves and entire fields of seething water, where a compact mass of fish—shoals of herring or mackerel—was swimming.

In the noon hours up towards the sun from the dark abysses of the ocean came jellyfish, greenish medusas and the colourful vesicles of the physalia (*Physalia pelagica*), like exquisite, fabulous flowers, bearing the very apt name of "Portuguese Man-of-War." Sometimes at sunset we saw powerful fish leaping high above the water and disappearing in the depths with a heavy splash. These were tunnies (*Thynnus*), a fish in great demand in European markets.

Occasionally by the ship's side would swim the sea bandit, the shark, attentively watching the passengers on the deck as though selecting the tastiest of them; occasionally small troops of hammer-heads (*Zygaena malleus*), of the shark family, with monstrous heads and yellow, furious eyes, made their appearance. Those malignant eyes, torn out of the heads and dried in the sun, form amulets for the fishers of the Cape Verde Islands, and seemingly have been preserved as talismans in the ancient families of the Portuguese fishers since earliest times.

In the air grey and white mews soared or majestically floated on outstretched sickle wings, or all-observant and rapacious sea-swallows. These birds would suddenly emit a piercing cry and begin to toss and hover; then after a moment, uplifting their wings, they would fall like a stone into the water and seize their booty. On the surface of the ocean frequently floated the victims of the unseen struggles which take place in the gloomy watery depths. We saw the bodies of fish, the remnants of medusas and squids, and the white mail of cuttle-fish.

The ocean, with its never-ceasing movement, the fury of its billows, the might of its rising and falling waste of waters, is the personification of eternal struggle. Surely nowhere is that incessant conflict, the recognized law of creatures living under the curse of the first blood shed in the dusk of the primeval ages, carried on so intensely as in the sea.

Suddenly the Tropic of Cancer addressed us. It respired with its fiery breath, fermented the ocean anew, and at the hour of sunset covered the heaven with delicate

rosy, green, turquoise, emerald and orange tones as though with an artist's brush. A moment later it dropped a black nocturnal curtain spangled with glittering stars, with flaming Venus directly above the mast of our vessel.

On the tenth day we were sailing close to high laterite cliffs, gnawed, scarified and eroded by the ocean, which here is lashed with continual storms. Two rocks formed a kind of broad entrance gate, and above them rose the precipitous coast, covered with vegetation and groups of buildings. A little farther on were two lighthouses in succession. This prospect was from the ship's port, and on the starboard was a little island, crowded with stone buildings of a strange, mediaeval architecture, and surrounded with a wreath of foaming wave-crests which shattered themselves against the rocky shore. It was the island of Goree.

On the port side of the ship, beyond brownish-black cliffs, rises Cape Verde, exposing a proud, powerful breast to the blows of the ocean. Passing by Goree we sail around the cape, and taking a pilot on board, we immediately turn to the east and through the gates of a mole enter the port of Dakar. The *Kilstroom* roars, shudders, and with a rattle of machinery drops anchor right against the parapet of the port quay.

On the harbour side are great hills of pea-nuts (*Arachis hypogea*), the wealth of Senegal, whence so much of this produce is now exported to Europe that the oil obtained from it covers half the requirements of commerce. At about a hundred yards from the harbour stands a picturesque building, the station of a narrow-gauge railway, over which a train runs once a week from Dakar, the

capital of French West Africa, to Bamako, the capital of the Sudan. On a high plateau surrounded with several palms a large, busy and prosperous town has been laid out, with the handsome and majestic palace of the governor-general rising above it.

We have to amuse ourselves in Dakar for three days, for our *Kilstroom* is to unload almost everything that her unusually spacious and deep hold contains. With pleasure we transfer to an hotel for those three days, in order to have a rest from the continual rocking of our pleasant little vessel, and also to see the town—first paying a visit to the governor of western Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THRESHOLD OF AFRICA

THE governor-general, M. Jules Carde, received me very affably, and assured me of every assistance during my travels through the territory governed by him. M. Carde was born in Algeria, on the African continent, where he has also spent all his official career. He has been successively governor of almost all the colonies of which he is now in charge, has been in Madagascar, and has now become the brain of all western Africa, an enormous country of 1,444,000 square miles and about thirteen million inhabitants. Having as assistants at the heads of the colonies governors who are fairly independent in their local policy, nevertheless the governor-general imparts to all a definite direction with a view to the execution of one general plan.

In a spacious, airy, shaded office with a marvellous panorama like a tablet of very beautiful lapis-lazuli, the mind of a European Governor was at work on the problem of how to add new members—with black skins and the souls of children—to the great and alas! unruly human family, and by what methods to exploit the rich but hitherto barren earth, over which hundreds of tribes and peoples have struggled throughout the ages yet have not succeeded in accomplishing anything great. Here behind the large

writing-desk, with its books, maps and reports from the Sahara and Lake Chad and the Gulf of Guinea, the governor's mind has undoubtedly more than once been arrested before the abruptly arising question: "The whites bring culture, civilization, victory over hunger and extermination, but do the blacks desire these things? Do they not prefer death in their treacherous brushwood-jungle, and their magicians and medicine-men, their Allah or wooden "gre-gres," to European ploughs, railways, motor-cars, doctors, taxes and wealth in the form of paper francs or English pounds? Why are the blacks indifferent to the whites and their labours here? Do they not perceive that the whites are driving them on to a point where extermination awaits them: either sudden, by war, for example, or gradual, by defeat after defeat in the field of competition, against which the black with his childish system of thought is almost defenceless?"

The walls of this office, the shabby binding of the books, the worn pen-holder, the pencil, the thoughtful eyes and the tiny furrows of fatigue at the corners of the governor-general's lips mutely betrayed these cares.

When later I visited the town and the island of Goree, where I saw schools for training teachers, doctors, mechanics and office workers, I realized that these thoughts had frequently troubled and disturbed M. Carde; and so he had resolved to call into being hosts of Negroes educated in his schools, and to give them strength and arms for the struggle with hunger, with death, with superstition and with exploitation by the whites, so that as equals among equals they might one day raise the issue on a clear and definite basis, either going hand in hand

with the whites, or refusing them their confidence and collaboration. But meantime the following lines of action have been laid down: to force the Negroes to increase their prosperity and elementary needs by labour, and to attract into the schools as many of the most capable among the Negro youth as possible from all the colonies in this group.

When some months later, after my journey was ended, I met M. Carde in Paris, I did not seek to speak to him of what I thought and still think of French colonial policy. Not because I wished to criticize that policy, but for another reason. I regard the great efforts being put forth by the French as a tremendous experiment, much bigger than the idealistic step of the United States, which had its consummation in the middle of the nineteenth century by the creation of a free Negro State—Liberia—situated in West Africa between the English colony of Sierra Leone and the French Ivory Coast. On the standard of Liberia were written the words: "The love of Liberty brought us here!" After seventy-five years the American plan is betraying signs of failure. Left to their own devices, the Liberian Negroes have done nothing which might testify to their progress in civilization. Such is the unanimous opinion of both English and French in the neighbouring colonies, of the captains of foreign vessels calling at Monroe, the capital of the Negro republic, and finally of Sir Harry Johnston in his work on *Liberia*.

The French Government has chosen another road, and if they were thinking of a slogan for the Negroes of their West African colonies it would read: *"To Freedom—through labour, civilization and prosperity!"*

So I regard the colonial policy of the French in that part of the black continent visited by me as an experiment, a mighty assaying of thirteen million Negroes. From my own experience I know how difficult and unpleasant it is to labour in mature years over a problem when one is uncertain of its solution. And so I did not wish to discuss it with M. Carde.

In these latter days, with their spread of socialistic conceptions, colonial policy arouses a certain dislike in democratic States. Colonization is sometimes regarded as synonymous with the arbitrary invasion of a foreign country whose population is culturally lower and socially weaker, with the exploitation of foreign lands and resources, with conquest, banditry, and piracy. But this view is seen to be erroneous if we consider colonization not exclusively in its present-day aspect, but with the future annals of humanity in mind. It is true that in order to obtain savage, courageous soldiers, cheap and hard-working labourers, hundreds of thousands of tons of cotton, sugar, rice, coal or oil, the present-day colonial policies of the white races lead to acts which are not always in accord with the principles of a high civilization and the teaching of Christ; but as I have already declared in my books on northern Africa,[1] even the reprehensible white invasion of savage countries will yield good results in the course of centuries, for it will assure to all humanity a more equitable and steadily improving standard of existence, and will bring all tribes and peoples into the great common human family, striving towards a goal

[1] *The Fire of Desert Folk; Oasis and Simoon.* E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

which, owing to the clash of temporary interests among individual peoples, still remains undefined, yet a goal that is great and, let us hope, illustrious.

That is my profound conviction in regard to the colonial policy of all contemporary States without exception. There are instances where the policy of a firm, even cruel, hand is being applied, and periods occur when policy is governed by the heart, or when the systems of government are adapted to the psychology of the populations in the lands under colonization. I think the character of French policy in those parts of western tropical Africa which I visited most closely corresponds with the last instance.

People who adopt a hard-and-fast attitude, or who are not in the habit of taking a long view, stubbornly repeat the stereotyped phrase that "coloured people do not wish to have among them either bad or good white colonizers."

Naturally the colonized country regards the colonists with an unfriendly eye. But what would these defenders of the coloured peoples say if they were to find themselves in a country, even in their own country, which was visited and decimated by plague or leprosy without the possibility or means of struggle with these epidemics? Would they not demand assistance from other nations more wealthy and better fitted for the struggle? Would they not curse them if they did not come to their aid? Yet are not the ignorance, the childish state of mind and the helplessness of certain coloured peoples in face of the disasters of famine, disease, lawlessness and bloodshed comparable with epidemic? Do they not demand the

assistance of those who have already experienced such disasters and know how to overcome them?

It is common for a primitive man to dislike those more enlightened who come to him albeit with the noblest of motives. I remember the years when cholera was raging in the Volga region of Russia. Even in that country, with its Christian Churches and State authorities, the primitive peasantry murdered doctors engaged in disinfecting wells and inoculating against cholera. And when the Soviet government ordered all illiterates to be brought to school by force, in the provinces of Yenisei and Tomsk the peasants revolted and murdered several teachers because they were spreading teaching "invented by the devil."

Mediaeval obscurantism tried to suppress Galileo and Columbus, yet in the course of centuries truth prevailed. The English colonists exterminated the savage tribes of Red Indians, but they founded the republic of the United States, which took the Indians under its protection. And so I am convinced that the work of colonization must be studied, planned and evaluated exclusively from the aspect of the future history of all humanity.

My mind was first possessed by these thoughts during my long journeys in Asia and Northern Africa and during short stays in India, Indo-China and the Sunday Islands; but they recurred with still greater force in M. Carde's office, where the fate of his tremendous plan and the destinies of millions of natives were being decided. During the whole of my journey I was seeking evidence on which to base my conclusions.

When we visited Dakar we were struck by the unusually animated movement in the streets, in the square

before the main market, in the shops and the port. I knew that Dakar had 35,000 inhabitants, but the traffic was such that a town with a population of 200,000 might well be jealous. It obviously proved the existence of intensive labour and of a brisk trade. The handsome government edifices and spacious private buildings were surrounded with trees or extended along boulevards. The public gardens delighted the eye with their artistically laid-out lawns and the flower-beds crammed with variegated flowers. Climbing and flowering plants adorned some of the houses. To an artist the market crowded with natives selling and buying presented a very attractive little picture, with its picturesque groups of tall and lissome Senegalese women, in dark violet, blue or green petticoat cloths, white or azure jackets like ecclesiastical surplices, and colourful turbans, skilfully arranged on the head in fine cockades or very ingenious, intricate knots.

We were astonished by the comparatively small number of men—gaunt and tall, at times almost gigantic, with the easy stride of mountaineers. I know not why, but as I gazed at them I seemed to behold before me the Caucasian Georgians, Imeritans or Chechens.

The gaudily dressed, lissome women had lazy, sluggish, though very plastic movements. They rarely smiled, but their black, filmy eyes knew to their very depths all the secrets of eloquent glances. These indolent poses, this sluggishness of movement, distinguish the élite of Senegalese women, who are famous for their graceful figures and—for coquetry.

The Senegalese women are representative of various Negro tribes, such as the Uolof, Serer, Peuhl, Tukuler,

Diola, Lebu, Malinki, Saracoli, and Bambara; but intermarriage and crossing with Moors, and particularly with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, has had a great influence on them. Experts can distinguish certain of these mulattoes at the first glance, and will pick out a "Portugaise" in a crowd.

Senegal being a country adjacent to Mohammedan Mauritania, it is preponderantly Islamite in belief. However, under the influence of paganism, the teaching of the Prophet has undergone great modification. The women do not cover their faces as do the Arabs and Berber women; they wear bunches of amulets on their breasts; their faces and bodies are tattooed with symbolic signs, their ears are adorned with gold and silver rings, and what is most important and most astonishing, they are not such humble and docile slaves as the women of other Mohammedan countries. Nowhere else in western Africa did I meet such independent women as the Senegalese. I tried to discover the cause of this peculiarity, and have only one explanation for it. Unquestionably nowhere else on the whole of the western coast of Africa is such a high percentage of admixture of European blood to be found as here. So this proud European blood, which revolts against slavery, has produced in the Negro ant-hill the dignified Senegalese type of independent women.

Involuntarily the turbulent history of this country comes to mind. The mariners and merchants of Phœnicia made their way in their galleys to the mouth of the River Senegal, to the place where now the town of Saint Louis is situated, and thence penetrated into the heart of the country, carrying off male and female slaves to Tyre and

Carthage. It appears that the Romans also sailed to Senegal from the western coast of Morocco, and after them the enterprising Arabs, bringing with them Islam and carnage. From the fourteenth century till the beginning of the eighteenth the French, Portuguese, Dutch, British and again the French governed the country after the manner of Conquistadores, leaving behind them blood and tears and something else, something which even to the present day speaks more eloquently than all the chronicles. I refer to the mulattoes, the descendants of white fathers and black mothers, in whose veins already flowed the blood of the earlier Phoenician, Roman and Arabian invaders.

It is possible that the Senegalese inherited their light step and their thin but well-shaped and muscular mountaineer's legs from the inhabitants of the hill regions of the Hedjaz, Asir-el-Yaman, and the towering Atlas; while the pride and independence of their women are a legacy of the white races arriving from the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

As I passed through Dakar, despite the splendid edifices, pavements, electricity and motor-cars, I was conscious of the historical tempests that had raged between the River Senegal and Cape Verde.

It is not to be denied that in the beginning of history, on the summit of this majestic promontory flamed a great fire in honour of the Phoenician god, Baal-Markod, lord of the Bacchic dances, which have survived till our day in the form of certain enigmatic tam-tams, or African dances; possibly on that fire an ox or sheep was burnt in honour of Baal-Saphon, ruler of the sea-winds; or captive

black children were offered in sacrifice to appease the cruel Moloch, that he might render assistance during expeditions for slaves, gold, ivory and ostrich feathers.

To-day a lighthouse, the masts of the wireless telegraph, and lofty European buildings stand there. Ostensibly all has changed, but among the natives stone fetishes are still to be found which in their profile and head-dress bear a great resemblance to Phoenician mariners or to the figures of the Carthaginian Astarte; among the Uolofs or Malinkis strange dances of Bacchic character are still to be observed, and in the crowd one may discover more than one native face with features and expression which, despite the ebony skin, are foreign to a Negro environment.

Beyond the wireless station we reach Medina, the native quarter: broad, sandy streets bordered by fences, with overhanging branches of trees in the shade of which hide the little native huts or simple cane hovels.

Before the French came to Dakar the entire district was a sandy plain covered with dunes, with masses of bare rock rising above them. Now vegetation is to be seen everywhere; even the rocks are overgrown with mimosa in which Agamae and other lizards of beautiful, changing colour have their nests; here also giant spiders hang in their webs, and one of them was struggling with a locust entangled in the approach treads.

Peace reigns all around. The warm, gentle sea struggling with the coastal cliffs only through force of habit, the motionless air, the turquoise heaven, the movement in the streets, suggesting the opportunity of tranquil though heavy labour; the lazy, dignified and graceful movements

of the picturesque native women . . . and yet, why did we notice signs of enmity to the whites among the natives? I spent three days in Dakar, and had the opportunity of hearing many curious things. During my further travels I supplemented this information, and found certain allusions in official literature.

Senegal and the Sudan have been the arena of invasions from prehistoric times. Hordes of invaders brought with them arson, famine and death, and behind them left hatred. Only the Phoenicians—probably involuntarily—taught the natives the rudiments of crafts and agriculture, instructing them in the working of iron and gold and the cultivation and weaving of cotton. In the fourteenth century the Arabs introduced the architectural style of the mosques, and this style has endured until the present day. But that would seem to be all that the invaders bequeathed to the natives.

The numerous wars waged by the Negroes of Western Africa against the avaricious newcomers from across the seas and from beyond the sands of the desert, compelled them to establish the great empire of Gan, which in the seventh century stretched between the Niger and the Atlantic and possessed a dynasty from which came forty-four rulers; they reigned in a splendid capital, now hardly discernible in the desert to the north of Gambia. The descendants of this powerful kingly family now cultivate pea-nut fields, pasture sheep, and carry on their heads the baggage of Europeans; but in their veins the blood of their noble ancestors sometimes rages and boils.

In these expanses of Senegal arose a powerful dynasty of Sultans, the Almorayides: who struggled against Gan,

subdued Morocco and Spain by the sword of the magnificent Yusuf ibn Tashfin, and left after them a proud memory in the form of Arabian-negro mulattoes.

A number of ruling families, such as the Dia, Kaita, Askia and others, more ancient than the oldest of the aristocratic houses of Europe, and once guiding the destinies of the smaller States existing on this stretch of land, have lost their sceptres and their royal and priestly insignia; but their blood, and perhaps their daring thoughts also, have outlasted the centuries, and live in the hearts and minds of their Senegalese and Sudanese peasant descendants.

The bold Portuguese Conquistadores, cruel in their greed, the Spanish Hidalgos, belonging to the oldest aristocracy of their country, the Rouen mariners, the British merchants of earlier times, in turn gave birth to innumerable legions of mulattoes, and even to-day produce these mongrels whose blood is envenomed with hitherto vague but now clarifying tendencies and desires.

The Great War compelled France to summon the black soldiers to the "field of struggle and glory"—to Europe. For the descendants of the former Negro kings, for the mulattoes with their warlike and savage instincts, it was a "holy war." Nevertheless, the modern manner of waging war at a distance did not satisfy their lust for battle exploits, did not absorb their thoughts and feelings. So with all the Negro's attentiveness and power of observation they studied European life, sampled other conditions of existence, made the close—the very close—acquaintance of the white women unapproachable in Africa, took cognizance of the brutal law of force which

rules among the whites, saw with their own eyes the carnage among those whom throughout the centuries they had regarded as invaders, and returned to their cane huts with a smile of contempt on their lips.

But meantime the French government was demanding continually fresh cadres of black soldiers from the colonies. In order to encourage the natives it granted rights of French citizenship to multitudinous hosts, and was forced to slacken the reins with which it had held the Negro hordes in check.

In the heart of the colonies this policy had no repercussion whatever; but here in Senegal and the Sudan—which are reached across the Sahara by the breezes of Mussulman hatred for the Europeans, whither holy marabouts, false prophets and agitators arrive from their hiding-places in Mauritania and in Timbuktu, where the vague dreams of the descendants of former rulers and mulattoes who hate their white forbears are being transformed into a lust of revenge—the position underwent great changes after the war. Twenty-three thousand black citizens of France are now demanding their full rights, just as of old the Roman citizens of Caesarean Mauritania demanded and struggled for them. And they take no account of the opinion of their white fellow-citizens, who regard them as a second- or third-rate people.

I know that the central authorities in the colonies, and especially in Senegal and the Sudan, have certain difficulties with the native population; but they are not despondent, since they are going the right way to the solution of this question. That way leads first of all

to the school. Here the Negro youth, in their own land and under proper conditions, are being gradually introduced to European civilization, and also to the understanding of not only the rights but also the obligations of citizenship.

Maybe in the course of time the French will come up against the awakening movement towards Negro independence; but unquestionably, so far as I can judge from what I have seen, they will have to deal not with an enemy but with a younger member of the human family, who on coming of age will have received the requisite preparation for benefiting by his newly acquired rights. In any case not war will ensue, but a treaty.

I would point to only one danger. As long as Islam —that militant, fanatic International, as sensitive as the ocean to every breath of wind—does not dominate the conceptions of all the Negro tribes, the possibility of an awakening among the black natives will not entail any menace of an upheaval; but if the Koran, with its secret hopes of a final victory to the Prophet's teaching, should embrace and unite the entire population of western Africa, then the future cannot be foreseen. The history of Moslem nations is not always the result of local conditions, but is sometimes the loud reverberation of events disturbing the life of the Prophet's followers in distant countries.

As I write there arise before me alarming scenes observed in different lands and different countries, where at sunrise and sunset the fanatical muezzins cry in a far-carrying voice: "La Illa Illah Allah u Mahommed Rassul Allah, Allah Akbar!" These devout invocations al-

ways reminded me of the sounds of a war trumpet, overflowing with hatred, sounding the alarm and summoning men to the attack.

I remember, too, and now can better understand, the face and the burning eyes of a certain mulatto whom I met and had a long conversation with at the house of a book-seller friend in Paris. I will not attempt to give a dry recapitulation of his passionate words, for human speech is always banal and cold when it calmly repeats the thoughts of another man. The tone, the manner of speaking and the facial expression form a background on which shadows flicker and dance—faithful reflections of the true feelings and unhidden thoughts.

And so to thee and of thee a few words now, man of olive complexion, changeful as the skies of thy native land before a tornado.

"You remember your life almost from the earliest years of your childhood? You remember? O, I see that you do, for a glow of shame has suffused your face! Speak, then, for I grieve with you and sympathize with you beyond power of telling. Begin!"

The mulatto's eyes gleam mournfully, his face changes like the surface of the sea, and his voice quivers and breaks.

"A little hut in the shadow of the broad, pale-green leaves of banana-trees. . . . Mother, jingling with necklaces and bracelets, avidly staring at coloured cloth. A black messenger had brought it from a white merchant trading in the village.

"I hear him say to my mother:

"'This cloth is for thee, Djelibo! . . . My lord awaits thee this evening.'

"The messenger bares his teeth and sagaciously, insolently laughs.

"'My lord said that he yearns after thee, beautiful Djelibo! I know what it means for him to yearn after thee!'

"Again a burst of laughter; but my mother, a savage woman fearing the sun and moon, the stars and lightning, water and the jungle, trembling before all things since everywhere lurk spirits, breaks into a laugh also, lacerating my heart.

"After sunset my mother throws me a bunch of bananas and departs. Long I see on the path her gaudy cloth and the green turban on her head. She is away the whole night—a night of infamy and disgrace. . . .

"She returns in the early morning, exhausted and broken, her eyes abstracted and her bloated lips quivering. . . . My mother's lips. . . . She tries to kiss me, but I flee. . . . I do not wish, I fear to touch those lips; for I know, or rather I feel, I can almost see what has taken place in the little house of the white merchant. . . . O, my mother!

"Sometimes the white man came to us, to our hut. . . . Then I was driven out . . . but I hid and watched unobserved . . . watched my mother's shame. . . . Once I drew my macheta [2] and burst into the hut, but I was beaten into unconsciousness. I began to be ashamed

[2] The macheta is a large, heavy knife, like a sword. The Negroes use it instead of an axe.

and to hate my mother . . . oh more than I hated the white!

"The neighbour's children called me a bastard. I did not know what that word meant. I asked my mother. . . . She only smiled, but she said nothing. I went to the village magician for an explanation.

" 'Thy father was a white. . . . He has abandoned thee, and will abandon thy mother. . . . You will die of hunger. . . . If thou art a man thou shouldst hate this white; thou shouldst hate all, all the whites, because they despise us!'

" 'I will hate them!' I burst out. 'I *am* a man. The heaviest macheta lashes in my hand like the wickedest knife! . . . I can draw the string of a great bow. . . . I can bear on my head a great basket filled with oranges. . . . I *am* a man!'

"One blazing hot day two years later my mother could not get up from her bed. She groaned and wept. . . . For several days we had been living on raw mandioc which I had stolen from the neighbours' fields. . . .

" 'Alpha!' mother cried—'Alpha! come here!'

"When I went to her, she said:

" 'Go to the white merchant and ask him for millet and money. Tell him that Djelibo is ill, very ill, that she is dying. . . .'

"I was silent.

" 'Tell him,' mother continued, 'that after all I have been his wife and thou art his son, and he ought to help us, for otherwise we shall perish. . . .'

" 'I will not go!' I shouted. 'I would rather die than go! . . . I will not go!'

"That same day I left home, and taking my macheta and bow fled into the bush. Only after the first tornadoes did I return to the hut. . . . I did not find my mother . . . she had died. . . .

"Our neighbours kindly took me into their hut, but I did not stay there long. The son of the head of the house called me a bastard, and I struck him down with my macheta and fled to the town. . . . I lived the life of a beggar, loaded sacks of pea-nuts on to boats, stole. . . .

"Certainly my life would have continued thus to its end but for an accident. A missionary found me streaming with blood from a street scuffle, and took me with him. . . . I began to study at school . . . I became a Christian. . . . Now I began to forget my shameful, burdensome childhood . . . until suddenly an incident occurred which awakened my former hatred. . . . Some high official visited our school. The superior spoke of me as being their best scholar.

" 'A little mulatto,' added the monk, laying his hand on my head.

" 'The innocent joke of a white man with a Negress,' the official said, laughing cynically.

" 'Oh!' I thought, 'if the white people do not take back those words some day—woe to them!'

"I finished my studies at the missionary school. I was transferred to a higher school. I won diplomas and a position. . . . I visited France. . . . I don't feel that I am a foreigner here. . . . I am astonished at Europe, but I am not oppressed by its splendour and power. So I am not a savage. . . . I shall return to Africa. Here I fell in love with a white girl; I dreamed that she would

become my wife . . . but continually the curse of my blood pursues me!

" 'A bastard, a mulatto, a white's innocent jest with a black woman, a man in "stripes and spots," is not worthy of even the worst and most stupid of white brides!'

"I was rejected and laughed at . . . with contempt and aversion, like an unclean reptile! . . . My story is ended. . . ."

"Your story is ended, man of the burning, olive skin? Is it ended?"

He was silent; but then he burst out:

"No! no! I await the moment of revenge. . . . I shall strike at a time when every blow will be mortal. Now I shall teach the Negroes hatred for the whites. . . . The time will come!"

He broke off and left us.

Thy passionate eyes, burning with hatred and despair, have remained in my memory, man of mingled blood, man without place among the black or the white people!

Such was my conversation with this mulatto burning with temporarily impotent hatred, and what I saw in the colonies has seized me with dread. The foundling, the dishonour of humanity, cries out in a despairing voice, clamours passionately, calls to heaven for revenge, menaces, sobs. . . .

The rights of a man and citizen—sublime rights—are in this case trampled into the mud like useless rags. In this regard the rights of the black and semi-black native recall the times of slavery; while the right of the white man, which in Europe is equipoised by the sense of his

obligations, is in the colonies transformed into lawlessness and wantonness.

If the moral aspect of the position does not move anybody, then let the practical results speak to the intellect. The natives, and the mulattoes contemned both by them and by the Europeans, will ere long forget their respect for the white civilizers. Through their black daughters, wives and mothers they will be too closely connected by consanguinity, allowing of a beginning to . . . hatred.

Quite fortuitously Dakar at once revealed this, perhaps the most curious feature of its present-day history to me; and as I had visited other colonized countries before Africa I could observe sometimes minute but instructive and important details.

Every day we paid a visit to our *Kilstroom,* where, in the sweat of their brow, our friends, the officers and crew, were working at the unloading of the vessel. One day, at noon, we went on. For about eighteen hours we steamed southward. The sea was so enchantingly calm that we forgave it all its former rather brutal sallies. Next morning, at a slower speed and tacking among posted buoys, our vessel entered the several miles broad mouth of the turbid River Gambia, the banks of which belong to the British. Making fifteen miles up the river, the *Kilstroom* dropped anchor outside Bathurst, the capital of Gambia colony. Immediately a motor-boat arrived at the side, with an English doctor and several mulatto customs officials. A few preliminaries concerning the stamping of the ship's papers, and we could land. The *Kilstroom*'s little steam pinnace, fussily puffing, car-

ried us to the landing-stage, where we were welcomed very courteously by English native police. For form's sake we showed them our passports, kindly furnished with a complete set of visas by the British Legation in Warsaw.

Bathurst is a clean little town, British along the river bank and Negro in the centre. Houses belonging to trading firms, the governor's palace, the edifices of the government offices, private bungalows built on piles for the purpose of ventilation and defence against rodents and ants, a church, and other buildings hide the native town from the eyes of the traveller. The small, clean and picturesque houses stand in the shade of great baobabs, oil and coconut palms, spreading bananas, and dark-green orange-trees radiant with health. The people are peaceable and courteous. The women sit in groups in the shade of palisades and hedges, gossipping and laughing. All the natives wear clothes, though on the bank of the Gambia we came across naked, horribly ugly village women. The number of mulattoes strikes the eye; they are "Portugaises." Of a truth, what a strange task the Portuguese mariners and colonists set themselves: to increase the population of Africa, America and Asia! And that everywhere—on the western coast of the continent, on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, in Angola, in the districts of Macao in China, and in every place where the Portugese flag is seen! They certainly do remember the command of God, "Ite et multiplicamini!"

Among the crowd of port labourers, "white Negroes" —albinos of rose-coloured skin with black and brown

speckles and blemishes—came and made a pretence of work. They had white, frizzy hair and pink eyes. By the English church was a large square, where the natives played at football and tennis. Several schools, a hospital, and post-office, but not a café, restaurant or hotel. This circumstance marred the pleasure of visiting Bathurst for us, for the heat was terrible, our thirst annoyed us, and here there was—nothing!

At our request a Negro showed us an "hotel" at the very end of the town. It took us a good half-hour to get there, and we found a temporarily empty hospital belonging to the Red Cross! But we did not regret our walk, as immediately beyond the hospital we perceived a lagoon—a spacious, evaporating swamp, teeming with water- and land-fowl. Here we saw white herons (*Ardea alba*), common ibises, cormorants, pelicans and various smaller waders, and in the surrounding bushes and groves were white-breasted crows, green magpies with long tails and white eyes, certain handsome birds similar to our jays, and kingfishers with splendid iridescent plumage.

Allah Bismillah! We see a mosque, and in the bushes at its side a band of gaudy lizards. The columns and cranes of aqueducts, the traces of canalization are noticeable everywhere. It is a completely civilized town, but the crowd is entirely native. Only rarely does a motor-car force its way through with an Englishman in it speeding to the port.

The colony of Gambia can be likened to a pump which, thanks to the river, sucks out a large amount of agricultural produce and other goods from Senegal and

Guinea; for the Negroes now have some acquaintance with the operations of the money market, and they like the white paper pounds better than the bronze francs. This understanding of the difference in the value of money has led to a seasonal emigration of the natives from the French colonies to the British possessions in Africa.

We spent several hours in Bathurst, and by evening were again on the ocean. Broad, shallow waves set the *Kilstroom* rolling from side to side; and this unceasing heavy movement had a murderous effect on certain passengers, for they disappeared off the deck into their cabins. At dinner there was a desolation!

Just before sunset I stood on the captain's bridge and admired the marvellous palette of Nature. The serene sky was overlaid with all the colours in the most delicate shades and tones; but when the last rays of the sun had faded, from beneath these multi-coloured mists clouds began to emerge and to crowd together into packs of complicated forms.

Soon the gleams of unseen lightning were flickering without thunder and without wind. These were peaceful atmospheric discharges, and not only did the clouds pour down cascades of electricity, but it began to flame in little plumes at the head of the *Kilstroom* masts and on the steel lines of the rigging. Suddenly the wind broke and drove down the rain. In two or three minutes tiny drops of water were falling; after a time the wind ceased and only flashes of lightning coursed among the clouds, while in the chasms between them invisible curtains were lifted, revealing the sky quivering in the

twinkling flames. It was sultry and hot. Our lungs respired with difficulty, our eyelids were bloated, the noise of our pulsing blood sounded in the ears.

With every new flash monstrous boulders of cloud emerged from the dark abyss of night.

Then I understood the mood and the expression of the evangelist St. John, when, gazing at the phenomena in the heavens above Patmos, he saw a revelation in them, and composed the marvellous cosmic poem, the Apocalypse. From the deck of the *Kilstroom*, by the light of the briefer and the longer flashes, I also saw huge monsters, dragons and griffins, locked in a terrible struggle; I could descry riders on white, black and red horses; and once I perceived the hand of Antichrist himself. It was endlessly long and thin, with crooked fingers. Within a few seconds this hand was crossed by the zigzagging of the lightning with a fiery token like a monstrous figure eight.

These phenomena lasted the whole fiery, sultry, sleepless night—our last night on the ocean.

In the evening we sailed close to the group of Los Islands, on one of which is a lighthouse. Soon we were casting anchor opposite the port of Konakry, hidden in the darkness. The black outlines of huge trees were clearly defined against the sky, and rows of electric lamps, the windows of houses bright with light, and the twinkling lights of carriages ran off into the distance.

A port boat came to the side of our vessel, then sailed away again. We learnt from Captain Soeters that we had to spend one more night on the *Kilstroom*, as the

authorities would not let the vessel into the port at night.

We organized a farewell banquet on the deck, and my wife played a complete concert on her violin. Everybody gathered around the captain's bridge, from the gallant officers to the last Chinese cut-throat. The heavy, sluggish, drowsy air cradled and caressed every note of the violin, and carried it lovingly from wave to wave, until the accord reached the bank and died into silence somewhere in the profound darkness, into the boughs of the trees on the shore. Next morning, we learnt that a crowd of promenading Europeans had formed an eager audience of the improvised recital.

At sunrise our baggage was unloaded on to a motor-boat which had been sent for us, and we sped swiftly to Konakry, bidding farewell to the crew of the gallant little *Kilstroom* and to the other companions of our long sea journey.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAND OF STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO INDEPENDENCE

KONAKRY is a handsome town, perhaps the most handsome along the whole western coast of Africa. On leaving the landing-stage, the traveller comes to a halt in ecstasy before the huge banyan-trees, each covering a good 350 square yards with its shade. The trunk of this tree, which is of extraordinary thickness, constitutes an architectural prodigy. The tree sometimes reaches to a very great height, but it is not strong; Nature defends it against winds by forcing it to throw out great combs, which grow into the ground and so strengthen the tree's power of resistance.

The streets of Konakry are shaded with mango-trees (*Mangifera indica*), brought here from South America centuries ago by the Portuguese, and now grown all over the colony. The mango-tree bears a large quantity of very flavorous and nutritious fruit, which have a slight odour of turpentine. The Portuguese have immortalized themselves in this tree, and the Fulah Negroes call it "Bodo-Porto," or Portuguese-tree. In native medicine it is used as a potent remedy for toothache, bronchitis and dysentery.[1]

[1] H. Pobeguin, *Agriculture pratique des pays chauds.* Paris, 1911.

Besides these trees the streets are lined with oil and coconut palms and raphias (*Raphia vinifera*). A handsome stone road runs along the shore, leading to quiet bays and on to a little port, hidden behind a wall of cliffs and providing shelter for small fishing-smacks.

Almost from sunrise until noon, and again from four till seven, life boils in Konakry. The Fords of merchants and planters speed through the streets; the elegant little "pus-pus" carriages, drawn by Negroes, rumble quietly along on their rubber tyres; wagonettes rattle past, carrying goods from the harbour to the warehouses of several large trading firms; crowds of natives fill the shops; black clients pass in and out of Government offices; the banks swarm with people; the sidewalks are deafening with the bustling and shouting of the passers-by and the mournful bray of asses bowed down under the weight of sacks of rice and crates of bananas.

From noon till four in the afternoon the town is dead. The Europeans dine in the restaurants or in their houses, and then take a siesta in shaded, airy rooms; when the heat lessens the ferment of work is renewed until evening, when a bath or nap is taken before dinner. At ten o'clock everybody is asleep—or at least so it might seem, for the closed wooden shutters do not let through the light of the electric lamps.

We spent three weeks in the capital of Guinea, so I can say something about life in Konakry. We make light now of the suffering caused us by blazing hot days and stifling nights. For one has but to leave the wooden shutters slightly open and in a moment the room is filled

with insects; they may not all bite, but they are an intolerable nuisance, continually crawling into the ears, the nose and eyes, or dropping into the food and drink. Of the smaller insects, the mosquitoes sting painfully and infect with malaria, while the small biting flies are dangerous carriers of dysentery. Great black cockroaches the size of mice crawl over the floor, and at every opportunity bury their teeth well into a man's body. Every now and then huge spiders blossom like some sombre brown flower on the white wall or ceiling. These nocturnal bandits prey on various insects, but sometimes they attack a man, and then he goes about for two or three days with swollen legs. The venomous centipedes which live in Guinea are here in their element, and carry on a stubborn struggle with the spiders.

In the shady corners of the room one may notice little balls of grey web. The traveller shrugs his shoulders with philosophic calm at the sight, and mutters: "Excellent servants! No one ever dusts the walls!" After some days the traveller-philosopher makes a fresh discovery, and a suspicion steals into his mind. For the grey balls of web will infallibly make their way slowly but perseveringly along the walls, and they all make in the direction of the linen cupboard or wardrobe. Woe to him who does not take immediate and vigorous steps to defend himself, for his wardrobe will be completely destroyed.

Sometimes hordes of termites get into the room, and during the night avidly consume trousers and pants, field-glass cases, boxes of cigarettes, postage-stamps and soap. Ants' nests are to be found in almost every corner, and

their tiny, almost transparent inhabitants devour everything, even tooth-paste and boot-polish, not to mention butter, cocoa, sugar and good English sweets!

I remember a certain sumptuous dinner where a panic arose because a poisonous spider fell from the ceiling on to the table, and ran with the speed of lightning across the white expanse of table-cloth, made a dive under it and was possibly on someone's knee. We searched for it a long time, for the very name of this Solifuga spider (*Galeodes arachnida*) aroused respect for it. On another occasion a hospitable host, bending over the bare shoulders of his neighbour, swiftly brushed something off with his fingers.

"What is the matter?" asked the astonished lady.

"Nothing!" answered the host. "I just knocked a poisonous 'tarantan' lizard off your shoulder, for if it had passed over your bare skin it would have caused a troublesome blister or set up an inflammation."

Occasionally one of the many kinds of scorpion found here makes its way into the house, while in the jungle the giant "king of the spiders," the Mygale, which ventures to attack birds and bats, may crawl into one's tent. The appearance of the loathsome scorpion-like but almost non-poisonous long-tailed "telephones" (*Telephonus caudatus*) is a daily event.

Sometimes, leaving behind the European buildings and native huts, our car sped far beyond the town. The road cut through the "brush," bristling with the undergrowth of grasses and prickly bushes, and crowned here and there with summits of trees. Coveys of francolins (*Francolinus bicalcaratus*) and wild guinea-fowl (*Nu-*

mida meleagris) fled across the road right in front of the car; over the jungle flew birds sometimes as small as the South African colibri—here also called colibri by the colonists—sometimes larger and vari-coloured, such as the Touraco (*Turacus persa*), the green cuckoo (*Chrysococcy smaragdineus*), the amusing "black fathers" (*Penthetriopsis macruda*), black, with long tails and golden crests on the comb, and the splendid "metal" thrush (*Lamprocolius purpureus*). From the trees hung the round nests—like coconuts—of small birds, here called "gendarmes." These are weaver birds (*Hyphontornis cucullatus*), the mortal enemies of ants, and expert weavers. From the fibre of palms and the slenderest of grass-blades they can weave fine round baskets with one narrow opening for entrance. Hundreds of these nests hang from the boughs of the baobabs, but if one colony of the birds has already settled in them, the newcomers locate their nests at the ends of palm leaves or the slenderest branches of other trees, in order to protect themselves from the attack of squirrels and snakes.

On our excursions outside the town we always visited the very assiduously maintained botanical garden. Here are gathered specimens of almost all the flora of western Africa: the carité-tree (*Butyrospernum parkii*), which yields a vegetable oil as thick as butter; the Papaw (*Carica papaya*) growing gourds with a high percentage of pepsin; orange and lemon trees; the "Kinkiliba" (*Combretum micrantum*), well known for its valuable anti-febrile properties; the poisonous "teli" or "gre-gre" tree (*Erythrophlaeum Guineense*); the colanut-tree

(*Sterculia cola*); eucalyptuses, various kinds of palms, and tamarinds; the Strophanthum (*Strophanthus hispidus* and *sarmentitus*), the sap of which is used for poisoning the native weapons; aromatic grasses: lemon-grass (*Andropogon-cytratus*) and the vetivert or Khus (*Andropogon muricatus*), highly valued as a raw material for the manufacture of perfumes.

We also found the flora of other districts and even other countries, such as ginger, the cinchona, cocaine, cocoa, coffee, and other plants. Here we saw the variety of monkey called by the natives "Kineinkuli," by the French the green ape, and by zoology *Cericopithecus callithrichus*. The mulattoes of Portuguese descent are also contemptuously given the name of this monkey.

From the administration of the governor of Guinea, and later from conversations with the governor himself, I realized that he is carrying out the policy of "the struggle for the Negroes' independence" in his colony. Perhaps this sounds like a traveller's tale, and yet it really is so! Hitherto the Negro has been a slave of Nature, a thrall of the sun. With these powers he cannot struggle, for he is still in a primitive state of development. If the hot season happens to last longer and be of greater intensity than usual, if the river floods are more extensive and the rains protracted, if the fertility of his fields is swiftly exhausted, the native regards such a catastrophe as a visitation from Allah or spirits or from the spectre of death. Seeing that prayers and offerings are of no avail, he looks on calmly at the death of his children and awaits the day of his own extinction.

In the colonies economic policy is generally based on compelling the natives to exert greater and more intensive effort, or to adopt mechanical power in order to increase the yield of the soil. But M. Poiret, with his profound knowledge of colonial conditions, came to another conclusion.

"Compel the natives to work a greater number of hours and to put forth greater effort? A law to that effect can be decreed by a stroke of the pen, but it will only result in an aggravation of the position," declares the governor.

The Negro is not lazy in the least; working in an average temperature of 98.5° F. (37.50° C.), he can exert the greatest of efforts, wisely dividing his day between labour and the necessary rest. If the present arrangement of his day does not yield good results the fault does not lie with the Negro peasant. Either the soil is exhausted, or the failure is due to his agricultural implement: the mattock made by the village blacksmith.

If under such conditions the administration still compels the Negroes to work beyond the measure allowed by the climate and established for ages, will it not frighten the peasant off the fields? Will it not arouse discontent, even outbursts of protest from the population? Will it not cause a terrible reduction even in the quantity of agricultural produce available as food for the native population?

For the time being there can be no serious talk of adapting steam machinery for field work in Guinea. The population is too poor, is at a low state of development,

possesses neither qualified mechanics and instructors nor roads or means of transport, and so tractors or other complicated machinery worked by steam power are out of the question.

And yet, M. Poiret declares, the replacement of the feeble human mechanism by a more powerful mechanism is both possible and necessary. This he proves with a few comparative statistics. Taking a man's effort capacity as equal to 100, an ass's is equal to 155, a mule's 375, and a bullock's 546.

In Guinea there are 800,000 bulls and several thousand horses and asses kept without employment; the Negroes know the art of rearing cattle and understand the value of manure in agriculture. The natives, like all living creatures, are very sensible in regard to the positive aspect of the law of least effort and in regard to obtaining the greatest benefit. Everywhere and always the agriculturists has a love for the soil and an atavistic inclination to safeguard the existence of his family. These qualities are still more intensified in the inimical tropical climate, where the least irregularity may completely frustrate the peasant's effort and activity. Moreover, the African earth is not fertile, since the rains and the ensuing droughts swiftly sterilize the fertilizing forces of a soil which is so poorly and superficially tilled with the aid of mattocks. After gathering only two harvests the native is forced to leave his fields and struggle with the jungle, with the aid of fire and the self-same mattock wresting from it new expanses of still virgin, very fertile earth. What Negro would not willingly work from year to year on one and the

same field and gather from it an assured sufficiency of food?

After a thorough study of the conditions prevailing, M. Poiret arrived at the conclusion that the Negroes must be taught the employment of draught animals in agriculture (bullocks, horses and asses) and the use of ploughs; instructors would have to be educated, and Negroes sent to French farmers for this purpose.

The governor of Guinea put his plan into operation, with the following results: In 1919 only twelve native families were using ploughs, to draw which 129 oxen had been trained. A hundred acres of land were cultivated in this manner with very good results, for their harvest was increased more than twelvefold. After the lapse of five years, in 1925, 910 families were using 1,146 ploughs, for drawing which they now possessed 2,300 oxen; and a rich and manifold harvest was gathered from some 11,000 acres.

Surely an eloquent and convincing result! The French destroyed the slavery existing in the colonies; the governor of Guinea is destroying the slavish dependence of the natives on African nature itself. And that is why I call Guinea "the land of struggle for Negro independence."

Owing to the extremely differentiated climatic areas, which include the humid Lower Guinea, the mountainous Futa-Jallon region, and the eastern section of the Sudan zone, and also owing to the lack of roads, this colony is still poorly investigated in its economic aspect, and every year brings fresh and more valuable discoveries, each testifying to great possibilities in the future.

The natives, and in part the few planters in the colony, produce caoutchouc, obtaining it from the plants *Castilloa elastica, Landolphia hendelotti,* and *Funtumia,*[2] and selling up to 1,500 tons yearly; the oil-yielding arachide kernels, the palms *Eloesis Guineensis* and *Sezamu*:[3] rice,[4] bananas, exported to Europe (about 1,000 tons). and pineapples (about 50 tons); (in Guinea fruit can be grown under perfect conditions, and when cold-storage vessels begin to ply to and from the country Guinea bananas will compete successfully with those of the Canary Islands); colanuts, tobacco, cotton, coffee, gum-arabic and the agave (*Sisalana*), which supplies a perfect fibre for coarse, strong material.

The mineral riches of Guinea are still not adequately investigated, but large deposits of iron ore containing 52 per cent. of iron and 3 per cent. of chrome are already known,[5] as well as aluminium ore (bauxite[6]), gold,[7] copper and other metals. Nevertheless, no metallurgical enterprises owned by Europeans exist at present. European capital is applied exclusively to trade and to

[2] The administration of the colony has established special schools for teaching the natives the cultivation of caoutchouc in Kankan and Dabola.

[3] The export reaches 3,500 tons of arachides; 71,000 tons of oil palm kernels and 750 tons of oil; 1,600 tons of sezamu.

[4] The export of rice reaches 5,900 tons.

[5] In the districts of Konakry, Boke, Forekariah and in the Futa-Jallon mountains.

[6] In the districts of Boke and Forekariah.

[7] The annual production with the primitive methods practised by the Negroes yields three million francs. The gold-bearing sands are found in the north-east part of the colony, and particularly in the neighborhood of Siguire. But I am convinced that in certain valleys of the Futa-Jallon mountains small deposits of sand containing gold are also to be found.

developing plantations of bananas, pineapples, lemon-grass and vetivert.

The French do not own any large-scale plantations or any factories in Guinea, and this circumstance is favourable to the Negro farmers retaining ownership of their land and being forced to labour more and more intensively with the new methods suggested to them by the colonial administration.

CHAPAER FIVE

THE ISLAND OF EXILE

AFTER a few days in Konakry, spent in visiting its environs and turning over books and documents, we made an excursion to the islands of Los, some two or three miles distant from the port. A government motor-boat came to the landing-stage, and accompanied by M. Pourroy, the prison inspector for French Guinea, we set off.

Los is composed of volcanic islands, and their form recalls a crater, broken by the sea from the north and south. We approached the large island of Tamara and saw splendid vegetation, with palms shooting towards heaven, and the scattered buildings of a Protestant mission left by the former British possessors of the island. The French effected an exchange, giving the British the islands of the New Hebrides for Los. Other memorials of themselves besides their religious mission have been left here by the British, for certain natives have still not forgotten a few English words, and among the population are Anglo-Negro mulattoes, bearing the names of Wright, White, Simple, Sam and so on. Our boat stopped at the shore of Tamara, and we climbed by a fairly precipitous stony path to its northern end,

where there is a lighthouse. It is founded on, or rather built into, a high and stout pillar of rock. Here we were met by the lighthouse-keeper, M. Ridel, with his wife and little daughter.

Tamara is the Saghalien, the island of exile of the African colonies. One might call it the "accursed island," but Nature has so bounteously endowed it with luxuriant vegetation, picturesque views, and a turquoise, sunlit sea, that one ought rather to call it the "blessed" island.

And yet in the middle of the island is built a "rigorous prison," one of the most rigorous, so experts declare! I know the prison on Tamara, and truly it is the most rigorous of those that I saw in the colonies of western Africa. But that distinction was not difficult to achieve! I have visited a number of the local "prisons," and I know that it is hardly possible even to call them prisons. The attitude towards the prisoners is good, and so is the food; while the work consists exclusively of watering the vegetable gardens belonging to the French administration, carrying water, and sweeping the courtyards of the Government offices.

It is true that in certain prisons I saw groups of prisoners fastened by the neck to a common chain. This made a truly disagreeable impression on us, yet more than once I saw prisoners suddenly freed of the chain, for they were fastened with fine strings which were easily frayed through by the iron. This sudden liberation caused the prisoners a good deal of embarrassment! They ran and searched everywhere to find a piece of string and fasten themselves again to the chain.

Another time I saw a group of "criminals" going in single file to work. They were all fastened by the neck—with a thin, almost thread-like piece of string, in view of which they walked very circumspectly in order not to snap their "fetters." I also observed a certain prisoner wearing fetters on his legs. Once the fetters fell off him, and the poor fellow racked his brains over the problem of refastening them on his legs. Thus the natives' chains and fetters really convey only the idea of deprivation of freedom and not the reality, for these chains could not render escape difficult for anyone.

Conducted by two black soldiers, we made our way down from the lighthouse rock, and on a narrow, muddy path we perceived a crowd of men carrying the poles of hammocks on their heads. These were prisoners assigned to carry us to their compulsory residence.

My wife and M. Pourroy took their places in the hammocks, since we had to cover a good two miles of road during the hours of the greatest heat. I with my assistants went on foot, taking note of everything around me.

On the road we fell in with a procession of wandering ants, called "manyan" by the natives. They are the most terrible of all the ants, for these sanguinary creatures wander in columns numbering millions, surrounded by divisions of very powerful and valiant warriors. The legions of "manyans" attack everything that they meet in their path—fruits, small animals, birds, cattle, and even people. Woe to him on whom falls this horde of courageous nomads, for after their passage only the whitening bones of any creature are left. Before an

oncoming horde of these ants the Negroes and Europeans abandon their settlements, lead away their cattle, and take their property with them. Sometimes even fire cannot restrain this moving flood of millions of "manyans."

Farther on, among the rotting trunks of palms, we saw and caught for our collection a huge Guinea centipede, dark brown and about seven inches long, belonging to the Julus genus.

The narrow path led through the "bush" of the island, rarely emerging on a small meadow, where we visited the cane huts of the Negroes. A hearth in the centre, a few wooden and iron utensils, a bed covered with mats—that was all, and yet in almost every house several families were living together. Close to the huts were small fields of mandioc. Millet is grown in fields hidden in the bush and sometimes quite a distance from the home of the owner. Here I saw mandioc for the first time; it is a tall plant with finely shaped leaves and coarse edible excrescences on the roots, like misshapen and elongated potatoes, and with a potato flavour. Two varieties of mandioc (*Manihot utilissimum*) are found here. Both sorts are edibles, with the exception of a certain period when the bitter variety is poisonous. Under the influence of certain unknown physical or bacteriological factors certain staple parts of the mandioc roots (glucosides) secrete the poisonous prussic acid.[1]

Here we saw the domestic manufacture of palm-oil. Two women threw the palm-kernels into a wooden mortar and pounded them into pulp with a heavy pestle. The

[1] H. Pobeguin, *op. cit.*

oil flowing from the crushed mass was poured into a large "kanari," or clay pot.

We covered half the journey on foot, but the heat was growing intolerable. Our thermometer registered 145° F. (51° C.) in the sun! It was altogether too much! I pocketed my pride and crawled under the protecting rooflet of palm-leaves which shaded the hammock.

At last we drew near to our goal. We perceived a large quadrangle surrounded with low walls of beaten mud. Inside it was the little house of the prison governor, the barracks of the garrison and the prison "building." The prisoners occupied either small single cells in a long shed or several native huts built in the spacious courtyard. Troublesome and refractory prisoners were placed in the cells, the others occupied the huts. The prison gates stood open. A Senegalese rifleman with a carbine across his shoulder was watching more than a dozen prisoners, who were occupied in basket-making around the walls. The prisoners rove through the forest, cut down trees and grub up the trunks, work in the mandioc, maize and millet fields, or carry water, entirely without any supervision.

The cells were opened and shown to us—an unattractive sight, but in the political prisons of Russia I had worse, darker, and dirtier cells.

This prison was exclusively for honest criminals convinced of the justice of their sentence, who had decided to serve the term of punishment conscientiously.

"Do prisoners ever escape from Los?" I asked the governor of the prison.

"Not from the island, but they do from the prison!" he answered curtly.

"What do they do on the island when they escape?"

"They make their way into the bush, hide themselves in the cliffs, live on wild fruits, catch birds, lizards, snakes or rats; but when the rainy season comes they turn up, and, after receiving an additional couple of years, they settle down again within these walls," the governor explained in a bored tone.

"Why don't they make their escape from Los to somewhere on the mainland?" I asked.

"They've tried, but no one has ever succeeded, for the sharks devour those who attempt it," explained M. Pourroy, drawing closer. "And now I'll present the entire prison colony to you."

The prisoners were mainly men convicted of cattle-stealing. The thieves drive the stolen ox or sheep into the inaccessible undergrowth of the jungle, and having sufficient meat to last them for some time they spend their days in a delicious inactivity, thrumming on a one-stringed guitar or muttering some little song with words simple and naïve, like the soul of a black criminal. The future prisoner sings more or less like this:

"Bluster, jungle, bluster,
Branches yellow and green;
Bailu is alone in the jungle,
Bailu is full, O very full—Bailu!"

From various casual remarks I became convinced that the growth of crime of all kinds is in proportion to the number of Negroes who come into close contact

with the whites. "The whites demoralize the blacks," declares one authority on Africa. "Sometimes they demoralize them involuntarily, sometimes even with the welfare of the Negroes at heart."

There may be a number of reasons for this. The African climate and the Negro social organization have together imposed a certain definitely established mode of existence on the natives. Let that long-circumscribed mode of life be subverted, whether by the superficial and unpractical education provided by the European or by a sudden growth of prosperity out of all relation to the effort expended, by his fortuitous detachment from the framework of his everyday existence or by the stimulation of his ambition, and the result is raw material for a criminal.

I examined the faces of the prisoners. The majority of them were in no wise different from hundreds of Negroes observed in the streets and markets of Dakar and Konakry; others betrayed certain signs of degeneracy; I saw several idiots and total maniacs, and one of them was a cannibal. I distinguished also the prison "rat" type known to me from my Russian experiences —individuals who deliberately get into prison in order to obtain rest and food. These are the most submissive, the humblest and most repulsive of prisoners, getting the customary amnesty and leaving the prison only to have a good time in freedom and to return when dire need stares them in the eyes.

"We gladly give well-behaved prisoners their liberty before the expiration of the sentence," explained M. Pourroy, "but the Negro community does not always

want to receive them again, and demands that we should mete out justice to the very end of the sentence. Sometimes a native released from prison loses his fear of punishment and commits a new crime. Then it is the worse for him! After Los he may find his way to the galleys, to Caledonia, to Cayenne even—and that's the end of him!"

Among the prisoners on Los there are bandits and murderers, types sometimes cunning, malignant and revengeful; there are political fanatics—exclusively Moslems, among them a certain false prophet, gaunt and with the inspired face of a sectarian and the eyes of a mesmerist. This man would talk with no one and would not answer the governor's questions, merely casting a contemptuous look at the whites and compressing his thin lips.

"Here you can study the ethnology of all western Africa," the inspector jested. "You will find here representatives of almost all the existing tribes scattered from the Sahara to the Congo."

M. Pourroy talked very affably with the prisoners, listening to their complaints and claims; in honour of my wife he released a couple, conducting us to the huts where these men spent the customary life of prisoners. One of the men thus amnestied was an old rogue, a soldier who had fought around Verdun, and who in addition to his medals and wounds possessed a number of faults and habits picked up in Europe, including the the art of importunity.

The governor gave us an excellent breakfast in a little shady arbour standing outside the prison walls.

At the table we were waited on by two very dexterous prisoners.

After breakfast we were taken to the women's prison, consisting of several small huts, around which was a hedge of dry branches and prickly bushes. Near the huts were a wooden mortar and pestle for pounding millet grains into flour, and several clay "kanaris" and "calabashes" or vessels made from large gourds—the customary Negro utensils: pieces of cloth, the native women's only garment, were drying on the hedge; a little fire was burning, and over it food was cooking in a small cauldron. In no respect did the scene differ from that of the ordinary native hut.

One of the soldiers shouted a command, and the huts disgorged their inhabitants. There were twelve women altogether, and each was more frightful and loathsome than the other—emaciated legs and arms, withered breasts, wrinkled faces and glittering, terror-stricken eyes!

"These are 'panther-women,'" M. Pourroy explained —"cannibals who have eaten their own children. They have been given fifteen years' imprisonment for that crime."

"Why did they do it?" we exclaimed.

"Hunger brought them to it!" the inspector intimated in a rather insincere tone. "You probably know that it is only of recent years that epidemics of famine ravage not the whole country, but only certain regions. The Negroes are thoughtless and imprudent, so they do not set aside stocks of provisions for the whole year. As a result, down to quite recently almost 70 per cent

of the population regularly suffered from famine. Now that no longer occurs, except in certain remote localities where we have little influence. In such conditions the mothers, reduced to despair, eat their own children."

In M. Pourroy's voice I distinguished a tone of insincerity and that resolution in expressing an opinion which paralyses any desire for further questions. I realized that as representative of the colonial administration M. Pourroy did not want to talk on this subject.

In order to make his task easier the inspector approached one of the "panthers," the oldest and most frightful of all, and began to cross-examine her.

"You ate your own child?"

"I ate it," came the calm answer.

"Why did you do it?" continued the inspector.

"The magician ordered me to. . . ."

The inspector grunted and threw another question at her:

"Well, did you like the flavour of your child's flesh?"

"The meat was very good; everybody in the village praised it," answered the "panther," not betraying the least sign of agitation.

It would have been abominable but for the simple ingenuousness with which she spoke. The logical sequence of the causes and the deeds was simple and clear: the magician commanded it, the mother killed her child, the meat was good, others had also eaten the flesh.

On observing the "panther" attentively, I came to the conclusion that she did not regard prison as a punishment for her crime, rather she seemed to think that the gods had rewarded her for her obedience to the ma-

gician, the powerful demi-god; for now she had no need to work from morning till evening and she was fed and clothed; they had no husbands, but, mindful of everything, the gods had sent a crowd of lonely men to the island, and the hedge of the "panther's" prison was so low that it frightened off nobody.

A few remarks dropped haphazardly, involuntarily, gave me much food for thought and aroused the desire to understand the true tragedy of the "panthers." Now that I have had many talks about it, now I have turned over the leaves of more than one book dealing somewhat circumspectly and shamefacedly with cannibalism, I see before me a picture full of movement and profound experience.

. . . The heat increased with every day. Now all the vegetation of the brush had completely dried up. All the wild fruits had dropped, a booty to ants or scattered into fine dust. The earth began to crack, burnt and parched into stone. The hungry field rats and mice came down on the village in bands to carry off the remainder of the stocks. Droves of starving monkeys had already several times ransacked the earth in the arachide and mandioc fields, struggling with the children, roving over the plain and through the bush in the search for food, for every single grain and every root. In the village the last millet and rice had been eaten. Hunger looked in at every hut, until it came down on the village and lolled like a powerful, almighty king on the dry and reddish-yellow ground and began to snatch away victim after victim. At first the older people, the weak and the helpless, died; then the

infants who could not find milk in their mothers' hunger-withered breasts.

From nowhere came help, and from nowhere was it expected.

And at that moment a tall, dignified man with immobile, burning eyes, arrived in the village from the jungle where he had his hiding-place in the rocks. All knew him, feared and respected him, but no one ventured to utter his name. "The man from the hill," they whispered. He was never summoned. He came himself when he was most needed, for the "man from the hill" was a magician. So they called him "Subhaka," which means "the man working in the shade"; for he made his appearance only at night.

Arriving at the village, he went around every hut, pried everywhere, understood all, and went off. But he soon returned, bringing with him the skin of a panther. Again he began to pass from hut to hut, from enclosure to enclosure, until in one he descried Ntiegi: a woman still young, for recently she had been delivered of a son. Subhaka put his hand on her shoulder and gazed into her eyes with his flaming pupils; and no one could endure their gaze.

After a while the magician went off through the jungle, and like a dog on a lead Ntiegi submissively paced after him. They came to a halt by the rocks in the crevices of which the dead had once been buried. There the magician fastened the panther-skin over the shoulders of the woman and said:

"The fetishes demand human blood in order to appease

their anger. From this moment thou shalt become a panther and shalt fall on the first human being thou wilt meet; thou shalt bite through his throat, giving the blood to the spirit of the earth; and the body shalt thou divide that all may eat, uniting themselves with the fetishes as a child is united with its mother in drinking her milk. Go!"

Ntiegi ran to the village. It was the dead of night, so no one met her on the way or in the street of the village; but when she entered the hut her new-born son began to cry. The "panther" threw herself on him with a howl, gnashing her teeth.

Next morning Ntiegi threw a piece of meat into every hut, eating some herself, and afterwards sought a long time in the hut for her little son, but could find him nowhere. Before sunset she had forgotten him; for Subhaka came again, took the panther-skin from her, peered into every hut, stopped in one spot where the blood-spattered earth was blackening, touched it with his fingers, took a pinch and put it in a little bag hanging at his neck, then went back to his hill.

The next day white people arrived, and behind them Negroes carrying sacks of millet for the starving inhabitants of the village.

"Good, good Subhaka!" cried the villagers. "He has appeased the fetishes, and see, they have sent us help!"

On hearing these words the official inquired what had happened in the village; and when he heard he shook his head sadly, divided the millet among the inhabitants, and went away, taking Ntiegi, the "panther-woman," with him.

The terrible, mysterious "man from the hill," sur-

rounded with idolatry and reverence, remained in his lair among the rocks; the people of the village lived happily through the period of hunger and death; while Ntiegi forgot everything, for many years had now passed since the first day of her imprisonment in Tamara, the island of exile.

As during M. Pourroy's conversation with the apparently abominable woman I gazed at her emaciated body, at her glittering, pupilless eyes, the strong white animal teeth, and her petrified face on which was only the one expression of wild vigilance, the picture above described slipped like a vague foreboding, an indefinite troubling vision, through my mind, and the monstrous *mégère* became suddenly worthy of compassion and understanding. This woman's soul had not yet emerged from the dusk of the primitive night of the cave ages, and tiny fires of prejudices, the beliefs and customs of long-past centuries, of countries long since sunk beneath the abysmal oceans, flamed in the inscrutable depths of that night; for their influence is felt until now in the brain and blood of the black people.

What a serious, noble and dangerous task the white people have before them in constraining these emigrants from the dusks of pre-history to pace the same road as themselves!

Engrossed in such thoughts, I took my leave of the prison governor, and with M. Pourroy and my companions I left the island of Tamara. As our motor-boat ploughed the waves, for a long time I saw the crowd of prisoners standing on the bank with the guard at their head.

CHAPTER SIX

NO GOD, BUT A DEVIL!

IN almost every part of the earth the sun became a god from the very first development of conscious human thought. Only here in Africa, between the equator and the tropics, it does not dwell on the Negro Olympus, but rather in Hades, the seat of evil powers. It is true that certain tribes still preserve the traditions of the sun myth; but these are old heritages, brought from the country of the deification of the god Ra, from Egypt, or from the cradle of humanity, Asia.

Outwardly the Negroes are quite indifferent to the heat of the sun. Their physical characteristics, with a skin forming a pigment and a greasy perspiration having a strong odour, a very porous mucous membrane and coarse, hard hair, witness to the fact that the all-penetrating rays of the sun are physically and chemically transformed in the body of the native, and thus their destructive power is mitigated. Yet the native's manner of existence, his need of frequent and rather long rest, his fairly short life, his slight powers of physical endurance by comparison with his stature and physical development, his custom of covering the body with layers of oil —all eloquently witness to the fact that the black people also suffer from the sun.

What, then, of the European? Not for a moment, even in his shady house, does the white man leave off the heavy cork helmet which protects him against sunstroke. It is sufficient to remove one's helmet for a few minutes in the sun; sufficient for a few sunbeams to be playing on the ceiling; sufficient for the opening of the helmet ventilator not to be closely veiled; sufficient for there to be a glitter of sunlight dancing on the surface of the water—and its rays steal through the skin or the eyes to the brain, and woe to the white newcomer! The sun-devil poisons his blood, ferments it and boils it, causing a serious illness or even death.

The local doctors told me of a number of such tragic accidents, but the most gloomy story of all I heard from a judge who had lived many years in tropical Africa.

"Here the sun is the enemy of man quite independently of the colour of his skin. On the blacks it works slowly, shortening the chain of days of his life; on others, quickly. So a European cannot remain with impunity for any length of time in these latitudes. The authorities give officials leave after a two years' stay in the colonies, and look on those who for various reasons remain longer in their outposts with a dissatisfied eye. After an official's return on vacation to France the Chief Colonial Administration almost always transfers him to another colony. This seemingly spares the health and strength of the State officials in great degree. But there can be no doubt that a long stay in this climate has a murderous effect not only on the physical health, but on the psychical condition of white people.

"On this point," said the judge, "I have known a very

convincing case during my practice. There have been others, too, but the one I want to tell you of was the most instructive, for it provided a perfect picture of the complete and utter ruin of a man. The European of whom I speak worked for several years in a trading firm. Every two years he went for a six months' rest to France and then returned to his post. After some time the man, who was still young, established a personal interest in a small settlement, and immediately, as always happens, began to work with very good results. From year to year his profits increased and gathered impetus. The owner (I will call him Paul Saunier) no longer had time to take a vacation and allow himself a rest. He worked exclusively with mulattoes and Negroes, having personal oversight of everything, directing the entire undertaking without a moment's leisure.

"His acquaintances and the doctors were continually advising him not to neglect the question of getting away from Africa, even if only for a short time. To such counsels Paul Saunier always had his answer ready:

" 'My affairs are growing,' he would say in a hard tone, 'so I cannot leave them at this stage. It is not entirely a personal matter; national interests are involved; the development of our influence among the natives, the creation of a market for our commerce. As we know, the French come to the colonies only unwillingly, so every working-man is indispensable here. We mustn't leave the outposts we have won!'

"The merchant uttered these stereotyped thoughts in too hard a tone for one to believe that they had in some measure become the principle of his labour. It was simply

that Saunier had unexpectedly become a millionaire, was making swiftly for great opulence. Not his fatherland, but the sum of capital growing in the bank-book of the former humble shop junior held him, fastened him with a golden chain to the insidious African earth.

"The subsequent court inquiry revealed that Saunier had been a long time a prey to malaria, and naturally without a change of climate and mode of life no European remedies could have helped him. The merchant tried to cure himself with the aid of Negro quacks, took excessive quantities of cola-nuts, which greatly excite the nervous system, smoked kif,[1] drank. . . . The nervous excitation evoked an extraordinary eroticism, to which witnessed the continual disputes between Saunier and the Negroes. Finally this man, already ruined in health, only recently still dreaming of a future wife and a family nest in the south of France, surrounded himself with an entire harem of cunning, savage and avid native women, squandering with them what remained of his health. After malaria followed a diseased liver, spleen and heart. Saunier became a wreck. He grew into an aged man, he went bald, and his face became lined and yellow and covered with dark spots.

"Simultaneously with his body the soul of the poor fellow began to fall sick. He could not sleep at nights, he talked to himself, did not recognize acquaintances, would not leave his house at all during the day, and often and without cause fell into ungovernable anger.

"Once he insisted on his mulatto assistant showing him all the account books. He harassed himself over them a

[1] A kind of hashish made of local hemp.

whole day and night, and returning the books the following morning, he shook his head sadly and said:

"'What a trouble! What an expense for France! The Chamber of Deputies is prepared to vote against such an extraordinary expenditure! . . . What is to be done? What is to be done?'

"He went out, wringing his hands in despair. The Negroes working in the office smiled slightly. They, the children of Nature, immediately felt the presence of the evil demon who steals into the human brain.

"Meantime Saunier had shut himself up in his room and worked obstinately, writing sheet after sheet and carefully storing the manuscript in a steel box. When one of the office workers or juniors knocked at the door the merchant would steal across, lock it, hide the written sheets under a pile of books, and only then would let the visitor in. With every day Saunier grew more mysterious and suspicious, until one day he summoned the mulatto and said:

"'Sit down and listen!'

"The merchant fixed his gaze on the astonished and startled face of his assistant.

"'Do you know, I have thought of a new plan for carrying on my firm. It should yield me millions—no, milliards of milliards! It terrifies me—terrifies because I foresee that all the safes of the Bank of France will not be able to contain my capital! What am I to do? Entrust such a treasure to a private banker? Oh no! That is too uncertain a method! To-day they are here—and to-morrow . . . I am working now at a plan for building a Bank of France here—in our settlement . . . a huge building

covering two hundred acres of land, with deep concrete and steel-lined cellars, so that neither thieves nor ants nor rats will be able to wrest my treasure from me. Listen! I have an enemy here. . . .'

"As he said this he began to look around the room.

"'Oh!' he exclaimed in a terrified tone, 'he is already here! He is already watching and listening!'

"Saunier pointed with his finger to the opposite corner of the room, gazing at something which was situated high up, almost by the ceiling.

"In vain the mulatto gazed at the corner of the twilit room, for he could see nothing except a small golden spot. A tiny ray of sunlight had filtered through a hole in the blind and was now trembling and dancing on the grey wall.

"'Do you see?' Saunier asked in a whisper.

"'No,' the mulatto answered, also in a whisper.

"'Do you see the eye—the yellow eye? That's he—my enemy!' the merchant continued to whisper.

"'There? That's the sun!' said the mulatto.

"'Yes, yes, yes! The sun is my enemy!' cried Saunier in a hollow voice, throwing a heavy marble paper-weight at the yellow spot.

"The mulatto jumped out of his chair and attempted to make his escape.

"'Sit down!' cried the merchant menacingly, and bending over him whispered in his ear:

"'The sun swore itself against me a long time ago, from the very moment that my firm began to go ahead at full speed. Yes! With millions of eyes it peeped inside my skull, penetrated into my brain through the eyes and

ears and endeavoured to wrest from me the secret of success, to read my thoughts and plans, in order to thwart my designs. It is he who has pierced my skin right to the veins, and with the aid of diseases has opened a way into my blood, to my liver, my heart! . . . Curse him! . . . Satanic sun! . . . And now again he wishes to stand in my road; he wants to steal my ideas, to baffle them! Listen! You are my friend? Well then, help me! Say nothing to anybody . . . to nobody . . . d'you understand? Defend me from the sun, and I'll reward you lavishly—oh, very lavishly! Only ensure that the sun never makes its way into here, that not one of its millions of eyes—its spies and murderers—should peep into my room where great thoughts and gigantic plans have been born. . . . Good! Only watch over this. . . . Be my defender against the sun!'

"After this conversation the mulatto became an unfortunate man. Throughout the whole day, from sunrise until dusk fell, he was sewing up openings in the blinds and plastering chinks in the walls and roof with clay, so that not the slightest ray of sunlight could slip into Saunier's house.

"The merchant ceased to leave his room, or if he was forced to do so he went with his head wrapped in a coarse black cloth. On entering the office he would summon the mulatto, and in a whisper, without uncovering his head, would ask:

" 'Have a good look around—make sure it isn't lurking anywhere.'

" 'No, sir, it's nowhere here,' answered the mulatto.

"Only then would the yellow, lined face of Saunier

slowly, cautiously and mistrustfully appear from the folds of the cloth, and his sombre, suspicious eyes would look around.

"This went on for some time, perhaps five or six months. Saunier wrote continually, working at his gigantic plan for the development of the firm and the transfer of the Bank of France from Paris to the settlement, hiding himself from human beings and from his greatest enemy—the sun.

"The unhappy mulatto was also very near to losing his reason, chasing after the least ray of sunlight which stole under the overhanging eaves of Saunier's house and into his dwelling, which he had shaded with several blinds.

"But the plan was still incomplete when the curtain rose on the last act of this 'sun drama,' played out during the white man's fifteen years' residence in the tropics—the drama of the white man who in his covetousness flung himself to the prey of the sun-devil!

"One day the mulatto went to Saunier's house to give him some accounts which needed his signature. In his hand he carried a satchel with a nickel clasp; and taking out the documents he left the satchel lying on the verandah. Saunier was sitting at his writing-desk and writing as usual. The mulatto laid the papers in front of him and stood at his side. Saunier bent over the accounts. Suddenly he sprang up and gazed in terror at a point of light which glittered on the crystal of the inkstand and broke into hundreds of iridescent rays running over the brass and glass objects lying on the desk.

"'You're betraying me!' roared Saunier, fixing the

horrible pupils of a maniac on the face of the mulatto. 'You're betraying me!'

"The mulatto was confounded and speechless. Neither of these two men could conceive that it was the sun which was reflected from the clasp of the satchel lying on the verandah, whence it fell on to the inkstand, and being broken up in the crystal, threw multi-coloured sparks of fire hither and thither.

"'I—I . . .' the mulatto began to excuse himself.

"'I know—I know!' roared the madman. 'You have brought the enemy here by a trick, so that he might take everything, so that he can kill my thought and me also. Then take that! Take that!'

"Saunier seized a revolver from a drawer of the desk and shot at the mulatto, nor even heard the muffled thud of the body on the floor, for he turned to fire at the sparks wandering over the desk until he shattered the inkstand to pieces with a bullet. Then the sun fled; and Saunier was left with the corpse lying at his side.

"The sun-devil had conquered. Paul Saunier ended his life in a lunatic asylum struggling with the sun-enemy to his last breath.

"I have told you this story so that you and the members of your expedition may never be separated from your helmets," the judge ended his narrative with a smile.

Naturally we tried not to forget our helmets, but that alone is not sufficient in a struggle with the sun.

I attentively studied the officials and colonists who, even allowing for their statutory vacation, spend a long time in the colonies, and I think that only exceptional natures can resist the poisonous, destructive influence of

the sun. The majority already have that poison in their blood, their brain, their nerves.

Only one section of the white community in the colony struggles victoriously with the sunny poison; they are the monks and nuns of the Catholic religious missions, who labour heavily and with no important results among the native population. I do not know how long these heroes of Christian ideas live—probably not so long as their brothers and sisters who work among the Arabs and Berbers in the North of Africa—but the destruction wrought by the sun is not to be noted among them. I think that their rigorous, abstinent life, spent in mortifications of the body, is the best form of defence against the sun-devil.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"SONS OF THE SOIL" AND "SHEPHERD KINGS"

FROM Konakry we made a long expedition towards the frontier of Sierra Leone, which belongs to Britain. Lower Guinea[1] is covered with bush, a jungle where great grassy expanses are intersected with forests which run down to the banks of rivers. Only the Negro hunter knows how to make his way through the forest fastnesses, which are densely interwoven with lianas and have no soil, for the roofs of the trees form a network above never-drying morasses. Every day at the hours of ocean high tide the rivers of Lower Guinea leave their banks, inundating the neighbouring forests for great distances. The banks are quite inaccessible, being marshy and covered with a network of ground and aerial roots. Thus the black land defends itself against newcomers arriving from the sea. Until recently there existed a branch of the forest tribe of Baga who never left their forest.

The tree mainly to be found in the forest is the mangrove (*Rhizophera mangle*), called "kinsi" by the natives. It is extraordinarily hard and durable, almost completely insusceptible to change even in sea-water, and containing

[1] The Portuguese took the name of Guinea from the town of Jenne, the capital of the now non-existent empire of Ghana or Gan.

a large quantity of tannin. The forest tribes built their huts on the roots of the trees; here they passed their whole life in the arms of a divinity; for they regarded the boundless jungle as the one god. Hunting, fishing and the fruits of the baobab, bananas, oil palms, carités (*Butyrospermum Parkii*), "dugura," and the nuts of the cola (*Sterculia accuminata*) provided the food of these forest people. The inhabitants of the jungle made only one important discovery: they observed that the leaves of the "sokli" tree (*Tephrosia vogelii*) are avidly devoured by fish. The present-day fishers on the Niger now plant and cultivate the "sokli," using their leaves as bait for fish.

We made our way to this country in a motor-car, with a lorry to carry our baggage. The road was good; ingeniously constructed bridges led across the narrow torrents and rivers flowing at the bottom of deep ravines. The bush came up to the very road, surrounding it with a wall more than six feet high. Over the tops of the grasses, bamboos and bushes flitted the colourful "bird-flies" (*Orthorynchus*), the splendid green and sapphire thrushes (*Souimanga magnificus*), cuckoos (*Chrysococcy smaragdineus*), and along the rivers the beautifully feathered laughing-jackasses (*Dacelo*) and the crested heron (*Ardea garzetta*).

When in the distance we saw the bowed branches of the huge baobabs, we always knew that close by would be a native settlement, for the Negroes regard this tree as sacred and tutelary. Along the road doves and wild pigeons started up before us, among them very large "korasa," as the local population calls them, or green

pigeons (*Vinago calva*), or the dark ashen "gamba" (*Colomba Guinea*); also partridges and field fowl, squirrels (*Xerus erythropus*), and the dark-brown mongoose (*Herpestes galera*).

The inhabitants of the villages belong to the Sussu tribe. Around their settlements are small fields of millet, "fonio" (*Paspalum exili*) and "soso" beans; the fields are surrounded with palms, papaws (*Carica papya*), orange, mango and cola trees. Larger stretches of tilled land are found in the jungle, while along the flooded banks of the rivers are plantations of rice.

The villagers follow the passage of the motor-cars unconcernedly; but when they come to a stop in order to get supplies of water the natives surround them and silently scan the travellers.

On the road we frequently saw the extremely beautiful bodies of young women, with very delicate features and expressive eyes, as well as men in white gowns (the "bubu"); among them can be observed very magnificent types, dignified, lissome, and of fine stature. All are friendly and hospitable.

Certain of the Sussus wear tattooed wavy marks on the breasts and arms. Some old women with their foreheads plastered with a kind of yellow clay attracted our attention. It transpired that it was medicine for headache, made from the "gesse" (cotton) plant (*Gossypium acerifolium*), ground into powder and mixed with mud.

We passed close to the red mountain Kakulina, of volcanic origin, with a summit like a table. Beyond it stretched a chain of smaller mountains of the same form, and reminiscent of old fortified castles with breastworks

and fosses. Close to the mountains we visited the large village of Koya; here we saw a huge baobab, stripped of leaves and covered instead with nests of "gendarmes." Myriads of these noisy and active little birds were speeding in clouds around the tree, whistling and chirping piercingly and angrily. For a long time I could not gather what was the matter; and only when I looked around did I observe several large vultures airing themselves (*Gyps ruppelli*), with bare necks and wings spread widely. These rapacious birds, which hardly evoke sympathy or confidence, were sitting on the roofs of the native houses and in the neighbouring trees, pecking out parasites with their beaks. Quite obviously they had no warlike intentions, but their crooked beaks and talons did not accord with their comparatively peaceful activities, for the "gendarmes" were shrieking their alarm.

The vulture, that hideous, voracious bird of prey, is under the particular protection of the French, who in general are slow to defend the fauna of their possessions from complete extermination. The vultures have won the privilege because they are the sole "sanitary officials" of the bush. It is they who eat all the fetid and rotting refuse left by the natives, they devour the carcasses of animals that have died in the jungle, and they kill snakes and certain injurious insects, as, for instance, locusts and caterpillars.

A monetary fine is imposed for killing vultures. The Negroes for their part surround the vulture with reverence. There is nothing new under the sun! I remember that in ancient Egypt the hawk was worshipped, and the god Ra possessed the head of that bird.

Beyond Koya we made our way across the fairly broad rivers Kili, Kuleti and Mellakori by means of a ferry. Taking advantage of the time occupied by the black guides in dragging our cars on to the ferry and getting them to the other side, we made a brief expedition into the bush, scaring the bird-life and the smaller animals of the jungle. Here for the first time we came across termite mounds. These were the settlements of the small red termites, one of the several dozen varieties of these insects. In shape the mounds were like mushrooms of the circular Negro huts, with a verandah between the roof and the earth. This verandah was extremely well shaded by a cleverly built roof with overhanging eaves.

The architecture of the Negro thatched huts was unquestionably borrowed from the termites, and as though in confirmation of this idea the Sussu, Malinki and Fulah natives sometimes put roofs stolen from termite mounds on the top of their huts. Seemingly they serve as talismans to ensure prosperity. I noticed long lines of heaped-up earth stretched like ropes between the mounds, but when I tried to break them I could do so only with some effort. It appeared that these were tunnels, or rather covered galleries, along which the industrious termites shift things from one mound to another, and which they use when in a hurry.

My subsequent observations into the life of these wise and well-organized little creatures revealed that when the termites intend to carry off or eat something, they first cover it with a hard cement of earth mixed with a secretion from their bodies, erecting over the object found smaller or larger vaults, with covered galleries leading to

their mounds. Without doubt they do this because they fear their enemies—the sun, birds and other insects, as, for instance, the wandering ants (*Annona arcens*) or the horn beetle (*Oryctes simias*).

I remember that once during my journey, awakening early, I could not find my boots which I had left on the ground—a good strong pair of mountaineer's boots made by M. Romanik, of Zakopane. I found them with difficulty in a mound of earth which the termites had succeeded in heaping up and cementing during the night, with the obvious intention of eating my boots as an unusual tit-bit. The trousers belonging to one of my assistants were in this manner consumed in the course of a few hours.

In Guinea and in other colonies I came across several kinds of termites, which built different forms of mounds. The largest are raised by the "warrior ants" (*Termes bellicosus*). These are mounds of a conical shape, sometimes eight feet high; and as they are almost always built under a tree they have original and quite fantastic forms. During the rainy season the water dripping from the high branches washes away the surface of the mound, forming bastions and towers, giving the termites' residence the appearance of a ruined castle of the mediaeval robber knights. That is fitting in a sense, for it is not for nothing that these mounds belong to the warrior termites!

Another kind, the Eutermes, penetrate trees, and extend their corridors and build halls, granaries, and other chambers in their interior, replacing the hollowed-out parts of the tree with the cement which they have themselves made, and leaving only the bark, with galleries

winding inside it. Sometimes the tree is so completely eaten away by the termites that a slight shake will cause it to fall. Trees occupied by colonies of termites are never settled on by birds or butterflies.

Towards evening we arrived at the settlement of Forekariah, where we were met by the local administrator of that province, M. Martin Chartrie, and his wife. He was a Breton, a great sportsman, athletic and energetic, with a thorough understanding of the problem of colonization—an official who loved Africa. Madame Chartrie was a fashionable Parisienne, abruptly carried off from the Bois de Boulogne to the bush.

We were to spend several days in M. Chartrie's comfortable and commodious house, for we wished to study the Sussu tribe here and to experience our first hunt; so we made ourselves comfortable in a room prepared for us, and the same day set out for the large settlement of Formoriah, on the Sierra Leone border. Along the road we saw wild coffee plants, agavas, cocoanut palms, large rice-fields, and a great number of unknown wild fruits with native names that conveyed nothing to us.

M. Martin Chartrie told us that the task of governing the natives is a very easy one, since they are a quiet, pliant and honest people. However, the activities of an administrator do not consist exclusively in government, but also in the propagation of European culture. This is far more difficult, for the Negroes have very few existential needs. A little mandioc, rice, millet, "fonio," pea-nuts and pepper—enough to provide two meals a day—is their ideal. When the natives lack these stores of provisions they collect coconuts, mangoes and oranges.

But with the oncoming of the latter part of the dry season, when all field fruits wilt and die beneath the sun, and the natives have exhausted their carelessly accumulated and recklessly expended stores, the Negroes penetrate into the jungle, hunt or search for wild fruits and edible roots, and exist somehow till the new harvest. During these periods of hunger the children are provided with bows and arrows and are sent into the bush, entrusted to the care of Providence and to their own wits. The black children set snares for the wild guinea-fowl or partridges; and when they cannot find birds they catch lizards or snakes, baking the capture over a fire, and so exist until the following harvest.

We arrived at Formoriah after sunset, but we were surprised to see that the streets were very animated, with groups of white people walking or standing, talking, laughing and singing. These white men were French and Syrian merchants, who carry on trade with the local natives and with the negroes of the British Sierre Leone colony. We learnt later that the Syrians have their own trading factories scattered over all western Africa; but their methods of doing business, which are usually based on exploitation and usury, are not tolerated by the Government.

All this day we travelled through great heat, and we suffered badly from thirst. Naturally, except for water of doubtful quality, there was no drink to be obtained in Formoriah, and we had still a good two hours' ride back to Forekariah. An unpleasant prospect!

Suddenly at the corner of the street I espied a white signboard with certain letters already well known to me—

"F.A.O." I had first seen these letters, the initials of one of the largest French colonial firms, on board the *Kilstroom,* for the whole of the deck had been barricaded with boxes marked with them. In Konakry I had bought many necessities for our expedition in the shops of the F.A.O. I always joked about it, saying that it was *my* firm, as the letters F.A.O. are the initials of my name.

On seeing the signboard of *my* firm I clapped my hands and cried to my companions:

"I shall treat you to beer in a moment! Let's go to the F.A.O.!"

We went. The manager of the warehouse and his assistant quickly made their appearance. I explained to them that I had taken the liberty of coming for beer to a firm that by an extraordinary coincidence bore my initials. There was much laughter and joking, but the hospitable traders regaled us with excellent and refreshingly cold beer.

On our return journey we were amazed by the number of birds that started up under the very wheels of our car from the ground lit up by its headlights. They flew off with protracted cries, or struck against the thick glass of the lamps and fell to the ground. One of them was left on the wing of the car, and we examined it. It was like a large wader. The Sussu tribe call this bird "Filikouonhi"; zoology had given it the name *Lobivanellus senegalensis.* It is never to be met with on the road in the daytime, for it hides in the bush or on the banks of rivers.

As we passed villages we heard music, and in the distance we saw dancing natives. These dancing groups of

women belonged to a race of invaders, arrivals from distant, unknown lands. They were Sussus.

The aboriginal inhabitants of this district, its "sons," are other tribes: the Yola, Baga, and Timeni, of whom there are now comparatively few representatives left. These tribes are the Negro pygmies' closest relations; and in any case, owing to the laws of endogamy, or marriage confined entirely to members of one tribe, they have retained the purest blood of all the Negroes. Of late years the Landumas, and still more the Malinkis and Sussus, have introduced a large proportion of foreign blood among them, thus producing black half-breeds. From the "sons of the soil" certain investigators have heard legends that the inhabitants of Lower Guinea are descended from Cush, the son of Cain, or from Cain's grandson, Ramah. If these legends have a sound basis, one inevitably asks what causes or people drove these descendants of the accursed family of Cain as far as this spot on the shore of the Atlantic?

Or perhaps the descendants of the true, pure-blooded Negroes came from other parts of the world? Why did they scatter all over our globe, throughout Africa and southern Asia, among the islands of Australasia, and even in Europe, where scientists have discovered remains of skeletons characteristic of Negroes among the prehistoric skulls of Basques and Etruscans? Can the African Negroes be regarded as the truest descendants of the primitive black peoples? Does not this right rather belong to the black inhabitants of Polynesia?

Or finally, are not all the lands now occupied by the black races merely their later fatherland, for which they

have forsaken their ancient mother Lemuria—the great mysterious continent engulfed by ocean?

The excited and troubled mind reels off endless strings of questions, of which the most important are: What terrible, monstrous cataclysm drove the black races from their original fatherland? Who was their primeval father? Do not very ancient Misraic inscriptions, which speak of the descendants of Cush, refer to emigrants from an unknown region, who in the course of centuries and interminable wanderings were crossed with other peoples, coming from the offspring of Ham?

Who is to answer this question? There are no written records dealing with the point, while the legends and traditions have been intermingled and inextricably entangled hundreds of times. The languages of the Baga and Yola tribes now have nothing in common with Asiatic dialects, yet, the customs, beliefs and ceremonials betray Asiatic influences.

These tribes have retained their belief in a great divinity, who sent mediator-spirits to the earth. They took on material forms, sometimes with the aid of magicians, in fetishes or in natural objects, in a stone of unusual configuration, a distorted root or branch of tree, a misshapen nut, an excrescence on a plant, and also in images of stone, clay or wood made by the magicians. Among such images one comes across stone figures reminiscent of the images of the Carthaginian Astarte and bearing the name of "Sitar," which sounds very like Ishtar or Ashtar in the language of the Carthaginians. Is this mere coincidence, or is it the echo of bygone history, of former tribal bonds, or of the yoke of invaders?

Among my collection, by the side of an image of "Sitar" I have a stone fetish of the Yolas, representing the bust of a bearded Semite wearing a cap like those worn by the Carthaginians and Egyptians. The Negroes say that this is the fetish in which settled the spirit of the ancestor of their tribe—a white man—the son of God, the sower of millet, the grain of the Asiatics.

Again one is arrested by the question: Are these fetishes the remote reverberation of still more remote events, lost in the dusk of thousands of years of history, or are they only archaeological excavations, the remains of an Aryan or Semitic race which in the twilight of history existed on this very soil of the African continent?

Does the blood of these white races still flow in the veins of the very primitive and enigmatic "sons of the soil"? Do not the eagle noses, the thin lips and the luxuriant beards of the Yola tribe witness to that blood? Or those of Baga-Fora: those daring hunters and warriors who spead terror among the tribes coming from the north and the south. The Yolas and the forest tribes have defended their land from strangers, and in their inaccessible jungle have preserved the primordial traditions of the primitive Negroes. Scientists are attempting to prove that these tribes were driven into the forest simultaneously with the pygmies of central South Africa by invaders belonging to white and red races, and later by tribes arising from crossing the Negroes with the newcomers. The "sons of the soil" have almost no cognisance of their neighbours; they have retained the independent traits of their character and the vestiges of a matriarchate maintained by active, strong and courageous women.

The girls go naked. A necklace of the kernels of aromatic plants, a girdle of shells or artificial pearls, and heavy brass bracelets on the legs and arms form their daily attire. The maidens enjoy complete freedom and are communal property. The married women wear cloths which wrap their body from the waist to the ankles, and are private property.

The "sons of the soil" are excellent hunters. They have exterminated all the elephants and hippopotami in this part of Guinea, supplying valuable tusks to the Carthaginian merchants, the Arabs, and later to the European mariners. When hunting large beasts the natives use poisoned arrows, but the poison they prefer above all others is that of the terrible "sali," or *Strophanthus hispidus,* and its variety the *Strophanthus sarmentitus,* the venomous juice of which stops the action of the heart.

The martial, proud and independent "sons of the soil" are hemmed in on the north and the east by the villages of the Sussu or Soso tribe. When a traveller who knows Asia observes the Negro types of this tribe, his thought speeds to the east and is lost in the depths of the mighty continent whence various races, peoples and tribes have wandered.

On the arms of the contemporary Sussu agriculturist one may often notice a tattooed, wavy design, reminiscent of a . . . serpent. "People of the Serpent!" What a stormy and bloody picture of former events, described on the walls of Egyptian ruins, is disclosed in these words!

The mind flees to the dusk of past ages. The people of the serpent . . . in Brahman India; the serpent of Adam, Eve and Moses; the veneration of the serpent in various

Asiatic countries; the European legends about serpents; the knightly arms bearing serpents. . . .

Investigators have peered so deeply into the distant past, that availing himself of the mystery laid bare by them, a writer may now spin a story the last chapter of which has the bush of Guinea and the ravines of Futa-Jallon for its scene.

The fifteenth dynasty of the divine "Sons of the Sun," the Pharaohs, was visited with a great disaster. . . . On the borders of the great state of Egypt appeared hordes of invaders. They arrived simultaneously from various countries, riding into battle on swift and savage animals hitherto unknown to the Egyptians. In every battle with the invaders the armies of the Pharaohs fled in panic, until the hordes poured over the whole country. The invaders brought slaughter with them; they put to the sword the families belonging to the previous and the reigning dynasties, and imposed their own law, the law of "the people of the serpent"—Su—on the Egyptians.

The Egyptians have immortalized them in their ancient inscriptions by the name of "Shus," or "Shasu," and they called the strange animals—horses—by this name. The "people of the serpent" boasted that their ancestor was a serpent living across the sea.

The new rulers of Egypt reigned in the land of the Pharaohs for from 220 to 500 years. They were the Hyksos. The Egyptians gave them the contemptuous title of "shepherd kings," for these "people of the serpent" were shepherds and nomads; they also called them "robber king," for the Shasus delighted in the shedding of blood.

The centuries passed, and the Shasus pillaged and ruined the fertile land of Egypt, beloved of Ra. So it continued till the day when the valiant Pharaoh Amozis the First aroused the population against the "robber kings," the Mentiu shepherds and Sintin archers, as the inhabitants of the Nile Valley nicknamed "the people of the serpent." Amozis drove out the strangers; and from that time they disappeared almost without a trace, retiring eastwards to Asia and westward into the desert, which engulfed them as the sea engulfs a handful of gravel thrown into it. But on the columns of the Egyptian temples and palaces were left hieroglyphics immortalizing the invaders, simultaneously designating the serpent and the horseman-archer Shasu.

These "people of the serpent" introduced Set-Sutekh into the Pantheon of great Egyptian gods; Set, the demon of the barren and sandy desert, the gloomy god, attended by the ill-omened servant, the crocodile; the god who creeps through the dark clouds in the form of a serpent. After the departure of the invaders the priests of Thebes forgot the "people of the serpent," but Set remained; the god with the form of a serpent and the head of a dragon, with the sombre significance of dusk and destruction, remained. That is all that survived in Egypt of the "people of the serpent."

Whether the Shasus perished in the Lybian desert and the Sahara, or wandered on farther, spreading carnage and destruction, the Egyptians did not know. The Shasus departed, and the sands of the desert swept over the tracks of their horses; the "sons of the sun" commanded the ruins and smoking ashes left behind them to be de-

molished, and new monuments were erected which have lasted down to our age. . . .

But the Shasus—the "people of the serpent"—did not perish. They crossed Mount Atlas, where the Suss tribe of the Berbers has preserved their name; they forced their way across the sands of the Sahara, leaving the bones of their fallen along the tracks which the caravans of the Arabs and Tuaregs pace till the present day; they reached Senegal and the Niger, subduing the existing Negro states and scattering throughout the ant-hill of the black tribes, bringing them the blood of the white race. . . . This continued for ages and ages; until, pressed on all sides by fresh invaders, the Shasu-Hyksos concealed themselves in the mountains of Futa-Jallon. There the "people of the serpent" remained until a fresh wave of red-skinned people arrived and forced them to flee on towards the ocean. After incessant struggles the Shasus reached the bush of Guinea and have dwelt there until the present day, their name changing in accordance with the nature of the Negro tongues to Sussu or Soso.

I saw hundreds of Sussus both in Lower Guinea and also in the mountains of Futa-Jallon (where they are called Jallonki), and my attention was always attracted by the small hands and feet which had surprised me in Asia among the incomparable horsemen of the Tuba Soyots and the Mongols of Khalkas, among the Chinese, and even among the nomads of the Asiatic north; by the prominent cheekbones, the slightly slanting eyes, the enigmatic pupils which seemed to be hidden behind a veil, and the occasionally positively startling likeness to the natives of certain parts of Asia.

The Sussu women are surely the greatest coquettes in the whole of western tropical Africa. Around their waists they wear broad, heavy girdles of artificial pearls or aromatic "Sumari" kernels. A gown untrammelling the movements, beautifully draped and of dark and discreet colours, embroidered shoes, and jewels on the neck and arms constitute the adornment of a fashionable Sussu woman; but she pays most attention to the coiffure of her hair. It is almost a jeweller's masterpiece, for it forms a perfect star with several rays, and runs into a little plait surrounded with frizzled locks. In order to prevent the frisure from being spoilt prematurely the Sussu negresses cover it with a picturesquely and artistically tied coloured kerchief.

The men wear the white "bubu" with wide sleeves and Arab trousers; on their heads are embroidered velvet or cotton caps; the chiefs adopt the Islamic fashion of turbans and sometimes richly embroidered cloaks.

The Sussus are Mohammedans; but the observation of the severe prescriptions of the Koran does not prevent their accepting fetishes and various prejudices and superstitions from their neighbours, or preserving former pagan traditions in the ritual, dances and customs.

The houses of the natives are distinguished by good architecture, with broad verandahs surrounding the round buildings, and plenty of space and air. The rich Sussus possess several wives apiece and live in separate enclosures, within which each spouse has her own house.

The morning after our return from Formoriah we set out for a hunt. We did not get anything, but I had my first introduction to the terrible bush of the African

jungle. A chaos of grasses, canes, prickly bushes, and trees, covered with a network of lianas and climbing thorny plants, flowers with a stupefying perfume, fragments of sharp stones, the mounds of termites and ants, holes closely hidden among the dense vegetation and excavated by the porcupine and "earth-pig" (*Orycteropus senegalensis*)—that is the jungle!

And a thicket so dense that only with difficulty can the hunter thrust the barrel of his rifle into the tangled network of vegetation! One has but to halt for a moment and the Negro guide in front disappears without a trace, as though he had taken a header into the sea. Shouts and calls are quite useless, for the dry, rustling jungle drowns every sound. From time to time the nauseating, disgusting scent of carrion floats to one. It is a colony of "corpse" ants frightening away intruders.

No bird, no animal, not even a leopard, an antelope, or a lion, is discernible at more than a few paces away from the traveller; and he is blind and impotent in this ocean of bush sweltering in the burning rays of a maddening sun.

I then fully realized the almost superhuman exertions, the courage and devotion of the great African travellers, David Livingstone, H. M. Stanley, Serpa Pinto, Wissmann, Arnot, Duveyrier, Clapperton, Caille, Nachtigal, Lamy, Marchand, Emin and others. Certainly society has very inadequately recognized and rewarded the services of these heroes, regarding them rather as adventurers, as restless spirits in search of the sensational, and not understanding what strength of will and body they had to possess in order to penetrate for months on end through the

African jungle, where the sun pours down a flood of flaming poison and the earth respires the venom of unknown death-carrying diseases!

The Negroes periodically set fire to their bush, in order to leave the ground bare for the fresh grass necessary for the cattle, and also to obtain further land for cultivation. The jungle around Forekariah was not to be fired for another two or three months; so here we saw nothing except a few flocks of partridges and guinea-fowl, for which our large-bore rifles were useless.

Quite tired out, we returned to our house before sunset. Here a crowd of natives was awaiting us, for M. Chartrie had kindly arranged a great "tam-tam" of ceremonial Sussu dances for our benefit. The local headman had arrived for this spectacle; he was a grave, dignified, grey-bearded old man, dressed in a white burnous and a rich white turban.

In front of the house was the orchestra, with instruments consisting of two balaphones,[2] a large drum made from a hollowed block of tree-trunk, and a smaller made from a python-skin stretched over a calabash; there was also a fiddle of one string plaited from horse-hairs. They struck up a very rhythmic melody in a hurried *tempo,* and while my wife was noting down this Negro music the dancers stepped forward.

The first to appear was a seven-year-old, completely naked lad, who executed a rhythmic dance with extraordinary grace and plastic art, accompanied by the clap-

[2] The balaphone is a kind of xylophone and consists of sixteen small boards resting on a number of empty calabashes. By beating on the boards with sticks, the musician produces very melodious sounds from them.

ping of all the crowd. The lad's chocolate body, his graceful arms and legs, were reminiscent of the most beautiful statuettes of Tanagra. Not once did the little dancer err in either the *tempo* or the rhythm, and he could have danced in any ballet. Soon other children joined him; they were followed by two half-naked, large-breasted women, who, bending their bodies towards the ground, executed a series of violent leaps and turns without changing their posture; a soldier from the local garrison next gave a display of frenzied leaps and whirling movements; and then on the beaten earth of the square before the administrator's residence appeared a most interesting group.

Before us stood maidens who on arrival at pubescence a month previously had been subjected to an operation corresponding with circumcision, a rite universally practised in Africa.

They were beautiful girls with exuberant, youthful figures, graceful arms and strange frisures. Each separate hair had been crimped and anointed with aromatic fat, and then fastened to a piece of bent bamboo set on the crown of the head. This coiffure resembled the shape of a Greek helmet or a Phrygian cap. It was supported and protected by a black kerchief. The girls were naked to the waist, and only their breasts were concealed beneath short, embroidered bodices. From the waist down the dancers were attired in patterned fabrics.

The dance, executed in a stooping posture, began by the girls walking with measured steps in a circle and waving coloured kerchiefs with very plastic movements. But soon the music accelerated its rhythm, and before us the

dark-bronze bodies began to leap and soar high above the ground; the beautifully sculptured arms flickered spasmodically in movements expressive of despairing and passionate appeal; the eyes alternately flamed and dimmed; the burning lips parted voluptuously; the sinewy, straining breasts quivered and inveigled, bursting from their bonds; the graceful feet struck the ground powerfully, raising a cloud of dust and scattering the little pebbles. As the frenzied, semi-conscious leaps and the sinuous movements of the heated bodies grew more violent, the embroidered bodices, the kerchiefs on the heads and the cloths covering the thighs and strong legs began to drop away. Another moment, and the naked bodies were revealed encircled with only a single girdle of pearls. . . .

"A bacchic dance, a ritual orgy!" I thought. "So do the Bayadères dance on the banks of the Ganges, and the Mongolian dancing women excited by alcohol and the sounds of the shaman fifes. . . ."

When, a couple of months later, I learnt that during full moon the men execute similar dances, then my thoughts turned eastward: turned to thee, mysterious Astarte, procreating mother; to you, pale divine Selene and pining Demeter; to thee, all-powerful Isis; to thee, clear-eyed Khastut, goddess of the Orochon and Ostyak maidens; and I discerned the primordial origin of these dances executed by the Sussu maidens descended from the race of Asiatic invaders. There were dances in honour of the moon, the spirit of fruitfulness, the compassionate power of eternal regeneration, the never-extinguished flame of desire and love.

Forekariah will remain for ever in my grateful remem-

brance, for it breathed on me with the breeze of the virgin jungle and enchanted me with the quiet murmur of ages long past. . . .

For this I am indebted to Martin Chartrie, the bard of Africa. He wanted us to stay longer, and persuaded us to make a boating expedition up the river, tempting us with the possibility of a shot at a crocodile. It remained only a temptation, for the river was not rich in fish and the reptiles had abandoned it for other waters in the vicinity.

However, we did not regret our day spent on the river, for we saw the forest jungle at close quarters, curtained with a network of lianas and surrounded with a barricade of tree roots emerging from the water. Somewhere in the thicket parrots were crying, monkeys chattering, and small birds singing. On the summit of a baobab on the river bank a white and black fishing eagle (*Aliaetis rocifer*) was puling, watching for its prey, while vultures were accompanying it with their protracted, mournful whistling.

The banks are inaccessible. We did not see a single native village along them. Only here and there paths, deeply trodden into the swampy ground by fishermen, ran down to the water. At times we noticed a net set for fish, a fastened boat or an abandoned oar.

Rarely did we hear the plash of a fish. In vain we looked for crocodiles on the stones emerging from the water. Only mews and cormorants were perching on them and there were few even of these. Ibises and small waders burst out of the river-side swamps with warning cries. Sometimes a wild pigeon would fly across the river

with a rustle of wings. Stillness reigned all around; above the lazily flowing river seemed to be floating the mysterious, enigmatic, incomprehensible whisper of the Sphinx, into whose inanimate yet eloquent pupils the forefathers of the Sussu fishers had gazed thousands of years before.

The black oarsmen struck up a song. At first their songs were laudatory, improvised compliments for all of us in turn; but they soon grew tired of this and sang other, native songs which my wife hastily jotted down.

Now the night began to fall. From beyond the wall of forest swam up a scarlet moon, giving everything indefinite forms and an indescribable appearance. The boat veered among the stones which emerged above the water. Bending and straightening, the oarsmen sang on in low, mournful tones. It was a sad, diffuse melody, ending with the despairing sighs, "Oi-e! Oi-e!"

We arrived back at Forekariah late at night, but by dawn the chauffeurs and soldiers of the garrison were loading our baggage on to the cars.

"Everything is in order!" a black-skinned corporal informed me.

M. Martin Chartrie led us to an arbour standing in a further courtyard beyond the residence, and asked:

"You will not refuse a little keepsake which is pure African in its style?" With these words he showed us the small black head of some animal hidden beneath a heap of hay. I drew away the hay, and saw—a chimpanzee! The little creature was only two or three weeks old, and was a helpless and very unhappy orphan. The little body

and the four feeble arms could hardly stir; but the head, with its strongly developed skull, turned in our direction. What a face! A decrepit, broken-hearted, pale old man with eyes full of grief and dumb entreaty, yet a gaze inquiring and intelligent.

Milk was brought in a saucer and the poor thing began to lap it up, lifting its heavy little head only with difficulty. Suddenly a small green ape came running up and not only drank the milk, but even licked it off the lips and beard of the chimpanzee infant.

Could I refuse so beautiful a gift? Fifteen minutes later the baby chimpanzee was sitting in a basket of straw in the motor-car and gazing imploringly, with affliction in its eyes and suffusing its pallid little face, which was adorned with a small black mask.

Truly for a month we had much trouble and ado over our "Kaska," as we called the little chimpanzee, but then the ape suddenly grew intelligent and gathered strength, joyousness of spirit and independence. As I write these words she is fourteen months old, and has come now to say goodnight to me. She kisses me on the hand, takes up her blanket, and wanders into the next room, where she will find her bed, and . . . everything necessary for the night to a well-mannered child.

The chimpanzees of Guinea and other colonies belong to the Pasteur Institute, where scientists conduct experiments on them with a view to carrying on the struggle with the most terrible of all human diseases. Thus these monkeys are martyrs, suffering and dying for the good of humanity. Perhaps they know that they are very like human beings, and so must die for humanity! Perhaps

that is the reason why they have such infinitely mournful, almost tragic, eyes!

The Negroes call the chimpanzees "old" or "former" people, and they do not kill them or eat their flesh. Among them they distinguish ape "kings"; they declare that the chimpanzees can speak, but do not wish to; since they know that if they utter a word man will immediately force them to work.

The Guinea chimpanzees do not live in large groups, but in separate families. They are a very noble race of monkeys. When they are in danger from a leopard or python the males will go out to meet the enemy, beating their breasts and protecting the females and young with their own bodies.

The chimpanzees continue to grow until their fifteenth year, when sometimes they attain a height of three to five feet. The length of the chimpanzee's life is not yet definitely ascertained. The oldest captive chimpanzee in Africa had lived for twenty-two years.

The chimpanzee monkeys are unique among animals for their sagacity and mental development and also for their ability to express their feelings. Our "Kaska" could distinguish [3] perfectly between the sounds of the door bells, the telephone, and the servants' bells; she understood quite a number of words. When the clock in the dining-room began to strike, "Kaska" would listen to see whether a second clock in my study struck too. When she was called by her name across the telephone she would answer with a contented and somewhat astonished chattering. She had her sympathies and antipathies, for

[3] As this book was nearing its end, "Kaska" on April 11, 1927, suddenly had a heart attack and died.

some people she would kiss on the hands, while she would not deign to offer shaggy paw to others; when the doctor came to paint her throat she opened her little mouth for him, and afterwards thanked him by kissing his hand; when anyone played with her or tickled her, or when she was very satisfied, she would laugh noisily; when my wife put on her coat, the ape, who loved her boundlessly, would cry bitterly; when she was unjustly punished she would scold passionately, or give convincing proofs of her absolute innocence; when she received a merited punishment "Kaska" did not pout or make faces, but immediately humbly begged forgiveness; she defended us valiantly if one of our acquaintances pretended to struggle with us, and even if she was eating a most tasty tit-bit she would abandon it and run to our assistance.

The Negroes respect the chimpanzees because they have white faces; to the Negro white is always the mark of the white man, the beloved son of God. The Arabs regard apes, and especially chimpanzees, as people accursed of Allah, in whom are strangely united the characteristics of the devil and of Cain, the son of Adam.

The chimpanzee's zoological name is *Troglodytes niger;* the Sussu Negroes call them "demui." They inhabit high trees, living in covered nests solidly built of thatch composed of branches, dry grasses and leaves.

"Kaska," the dearest and most beautiful representative of the chimpanzee people, was given to us as a keepsake by the kindly M. and Mme. Martin Chartrie, of the hospitable residence at Forekariah. But undoubtedly the dear lady parted with her foster-child with pain in her heart, though it was so well hidden in her beautiful eyes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A BREATH OF EUROPE AND AGAIN THE JUNGLE

THE day after our return to Konakry the governor of Guinea, M. Georges Poiret, returned from France. The administration and the population, both white and black, went to meet M. Poiret, for he enjoys a great popularity in his colony. In order to see the governor and to press his hand, the chiefs of the Sussu, Malinki and Fulah tribes had arrived in crowds with their orchestras and their griot jesters and dancers. The chiefs formed a picturesque group. Aristocratic, proud faces, huge, magnificent statures, fine, white embroidered gowns, long priestly staffs in their hands and slow, dignified movements distinguished these descendants of the terrible "shepherd kings," of the "sons of the soil," and perhaps of the purest, because the oldest, Egyptians of Phut.

With M. Poiret, who is a very well-educated colonial administrator, I had many conversations, from which I learned a great deal. I realized the fundamental principle of the French policy in the colonies, which has as its aim the creation of cadres of more or less civilized Negroes, who will not want and who perhaps will not even be able to return to their former primitive life. They would naturally be a minority in the Negro community,

but in face of the general passivity of the natives the "new" Negroes might constitute a powerful civilizing factor by attracting continually more extensive and numerous sections of the population into their ranks.

It seems to me that this plan is based on thoroughly sound psychological principles and may be successful. However, I have certain doubts whether the mulattoes—a dangerous element whose steady increase is at present not restricted by law—may not prove an obstacle. I am afraid that the whites may be faced with a repetition of the historic events which shook the foundations of ancient Rome in Africa, when there were outbreaks of discontent among the populace, who demanded the right of *jus connubium*—demanded that coloured wives and children should be conceded Roman citizenship with all its privileges. The mulattoes will unquestionably claim similar rights, and if they succeed in dragging their black mothers after them the consequences may be incalculable. M. Poiret personally believes in the possibility of civilizing the Negroes and emancipating the native intellect.

On M. Poiret's arrival we made the acquaintance of the European colony in Konakry, and began to lead a worldly existence which afforded many opportunities for all kinds of observations.

In return for their hospitality my wife organized two concerts in the local club; to this end she requested M. Bertrand and the governor, M. Poiret, both good pianists, to be accompanists; she discovered ladies and gentlemen who could sing, had several rehearsals with them, and the concert promised to be a brilliant affair.

I attentively watched the impression made on the audi-

ence by the music. Never at a concert had I seen such agitated, pallid faces, quivering lips, sparkling eyes, and strongly clenched fists. The music evoked in their memories the features and tones of beloved beings, and the power of the master composers suddenly united people scattered throughout the earth. So at least it seemed to me; while my wife, who is accustomed to playing in great European centers, afterwards told me that she played in this little club hall of Konakry as though she were in a church, for she was conscious of an unusual mood in the audience.

This was seemingly the first concert ever held in the capital of Guinea, but it is not likely to be the last; for the artistic talent of MM. Durand, Bertrand, M. and Mme. Funeau and others discovered by my wife are a guarantee of that, while the direction of this group might well be undertaken by M. Poiret, a pianist of no common merit.

The morning after the concert we were again in the jungle. This time we visited the districts around the villages of Koya and Dubreka. Near Koya we killed one crocodile and fired at two others. The banks of the River Koya or Sorinka abound in water-fowl; we obtained several specimens, and among them our European curlew (*Numenius arquatus*), which looked quite foreign among the tropical ibises, the white egrets, the variegated bitterns and the parrots and green pigeons perching above the water. The inhabitant of Europe and Asia was like a man in a grey, well-worn suit among frock-coated gentlemen.

In the other settlement of Dubreka the supreme author-

ity is vested in a black, rather stupid brigadier, who cannot speak the Sussu language and speaks French very badly.

Our arrival here made a good anecdote. All our store of alcohol, carried for the collection of insects, had evaporated during the journey. We turned to the brigadier for assistance, but he directed us to the teacher, a Negro.

"I am very glad to be of service," said the teacher, solemnly, when we explained why we needed alcohol. "I will write a letter at once to my friend, a merchant who trades in Dubreka."

After a while the letter was ready, and it read ludicrously:

Sir I request you to supply alcohol for the Whites who arrived this morning. This is for preserving the insects which are with them. With regards. N. N.[1]

Oh, those Negro letters! Usually they are written in an intricate, flowery language by the teacher, the interpreter or pupils of French-Negro schools, who are more concerned with a verbal pyrotechnic display than for the good sense of the contents. When their fellow-countrymen in the village receive such a letter they run to the interpreter to translate and transcribe it. The answer usually begins with the words:

Respected and dear N. N. We have received your beautiful letter, which no one could understand, but that doesn't matter. We inform you that your mother Asere greets you, that your wife Gangue greets you, that your father Satone greets you, that . . . etc.

[1] The French text of the letter: "Monsieur, Prière delivrer s'il vous plaît de l'alcool à brûler pour des Blancs, qui sont arrivés ce matin. C'est pour conserver les insectes qui sont avec eux.
Amitiés. N. N.

The head of the governor's office in Konakry, M. Oswald Durand, gave us a copy of his excellently written book, *Pellobellé*, and he told us much about the native letters and their official petitions, incomprehensible—but always intricate and verbose.

We did not find any alcohol in Dubreka, and so we entered a large canoe and sailed the whole day along the broad River Kabutai. In some places it was barred by shoals formed by banks of oysters. The shells of these molluscs were stuck all over the roots of the river-side trees emerging from the water, and in these shells were settled little crabs—Pinnotheres. Other crabs, variegated and nimble, were running over the swampy banks, lurking in their hiding-places, or lying in wait for the little fish *Periophtalmus Koelreuteri*, which can hop and clamber up trees. These crabs had little horns for the purpose of luring the fish, and one large powerful pincer and a second much smaller claw. So far as I could judge they belong to the family *Gelasimus fluviatilis*.

The morasses were swarming with river-fowl; herons, bitterns, and the smaller waders had here an excellent and abundant aliment. In the river-side thicket monkeys were chattering. Momently we heard the splash of fish. Close to our canoe we observed two garfish.

The Kabutai is a paradise for fishermen. Fish large and small are leaping out of the water continually. A whole shoal of them swam along close to our boat, fleeing before the pursuit of the rapacious denizens of the water. Along the river we met with several canoes of fishers occupied at their labours. On the tiny cockle-shells, hollowed out of one block of wood, two fishermen

would sit horseman-fashion, with legs dangling over the water. Each of them had three lines provided with weights and hooks. The lines were thrown into the water, one cord being clenched between the great and second toe of each foot and the third being held in the left hand. When the fish began to tug violently the fishermen slowly drew out the cords. Not a moment passed without our seeing the broad silver bodies of fish flung into the boat.

Dubreka is a place whence large quantities of colanuts (a narcotic indispensable to the natives) are exported to Europe and also supplied for the internal market. The cola cures and protects the Negro from various illnesses; it quenches thirst and assuages the pangs of hunger during heavy marches; it gives them moments of luxurious oblivion and sweet visions; and it is the talisman of love, since any father will sell his daughter for a hundred of these nuts.

In the forests around Dubreka and throughout the whole of the Guinea jungle numerous plants unknown to science, possessing curative and poisonous qualities, are to be found. M. H. Pobeguin has studied the application of the known botanical plants in Negro medicine, and I cite several examples from his work.[2] The fruit of the "silk" tree (*Asclepius gigantea*) serves as a remedy for leprosy and other skin diseases; the "kinkiliba" (*Combretum micranthum*) for yellow fever; the tamarind bark for stomachic aliments and for wounds; the "kossafina" (*Vernonia senegalensis*) is the "quinine of the black people," a medicine for malaria; the ash of the banana-tree stops the flow of blood from a wound.

[2] *Agriculture pratique des pays chauds.* Paris, 1911.

However, these remedies are well known and not kept a secret by the natives; but all those which constitute the mystery of the magicians, the Negro quacks, remain uninvestigated, and here a wide field for instructive studies lies unexplored.

Very high colonial officials assured me that the magicians know of plants which can cause madness in beasts and men, but they also know other herbs which cure madness certainly and infallibly; the magicians apply various plants for increasing the quantity of milk in women, cows and goats, using for this purpose the *Ficus sycomorus* among others; the quacks give men an herbal potion to drink, after which the patient falls into an epileptic state and gives vent to prophetic utterances; the excitation of the senses, the return of youthful powers, the kindling of jealousy, the removal of an enemy—for all these things prescriptions of botanical origin exist, as well as conjurations and amulets.

I must give first place to the powerful poison made from the bark of the "teli" or "gre-gre" tree (*Erythrophleum guineense*). The action of this poison and its customary application can best be grasped by means of a story told us in Konakry on Christmas Eve by a certain local merchant who knew the whole of western Africa.

CHAPTER NINE

TRIAL BY POISON

ONE day," my acquaintance began his narrative, "a boat from Marseilles arrived at our port. Only one passenger disembarked on the landing-stage, and she immediately made her way to the governor's residence. Announcing herself to the official on duty, the woman showed her passport and intimated that she was the wife of a corporal in a regiment of Senegalese riflemen, Moriba Jallo, who was the son of the king of the Malinki tribe.

" 'But we haven't any king here,' the official protested.

" 'I know that,' the woman answered with dignity. 'Indeed, my husband complained that the French authorities were completely destroying the influence and prestige of the former royal families; he said that our administration acts contrarily to the traditions of humanity and are involuntarily assisting in the spread of Islamism, for that religion always finds support among the ruling and influential families.'

"The official gazed at the speaker in amazement, for he had seen the same opinion expressed in the works of various important authors and in the reports of higher officials; but after a moment he recovered his composure and said:

" 'Maybe—maybe it is all as you say, dear madam, but I assure you quite definitely that no one in the colonies has ever heard of a "king" bearing the name of Jallo.'

"The woman dropped her eyes and pressed her lips together, unappeased and unconvinced.

" 'What does madame want the administration to do?' the official asked meantime.

" 'I want to find my husband and to live with him!" she explained, raising her blue, sorrowful eyes.

" 'It will not be an easy task to discover Moriba Jallo, for probably there are many Negroes who have the same name and surname. . . .' The official reflected. 'May I ask madame now for certain information which I must enter on the protocol? Madame's Christian name?'

" 'Magdalena.'

" 'Maiden name?'

" 'Truot."

" 'Age and religion?'

" 'Twenty-seven. Roman Catholic.'

" 'Education? Profession?'

" 'I have had a technical school education. I am an embroidress by trade.'

" 'In what church did madame's marriage with Corporal Jallo take place?'

" 'In the Catholic church attached to the hospital of St. Roch in M., where my present husband lay wounded after the battle of the Marne.'

" 'So Moriba Jallo was a Christian?'

" 'So he informed the priest.'

" 'Why did madame not come here with her husband?'

" 'When they invalided him from the hospital to Africa I hadn't the money for the journey.'

" 'The government would undoubtedly have given madame a free travelling pass and monetary assistance,' remarked the official. 'Why did madame not apply to the government?'

" 'Moriba Jallo told me that it was not for him, a son of royalty, to avail himself of governmental assistance, and he promised to send me money from his home,' Madame Magdalena answered, with a certain note of pride in her voice.

" 'So finally he sent you the money necessary for the journey?'

" 'No! I came at my own cost.'

" 'Did Corporal Jallo write any letters to madame?'

" 'No. . . .'

" 'Does madame not understand that Corporal Jallo is just a common rogue who has taken advantage of madame's inexperience?' the official burst out.

" 'No, sir!' the woman exclaimed, again raising her sorrowful eyes. 'I think Moriba is ill after those terrible wounds which he received in fighting for France, so he cannot write or send me money. O! I saw the wounds when I went to the hospital to sew linen for the wounded heroes or to roll bandages. I went every night in order to serve France somehow in the difficult moment of need and danger. Without doubt he is very ill, perhaps he is no longer alive. In that case I should like to pray at his grave and raise a cross above it. . . .'

"She folded her hands as in prayer, and imploringly gazed into the official's eyes. He was going to ask a

further question; but he suddenly changed his mind and said in a quiet tone:

" 'I shall give instructions for madame to be accommodated in the guest-room of the officers' quarters, and shall immediately begin the search for the corporal.'

"He wrote a few words on a card, summoned a messenger, and ordered him to conduct Mme. Magdalena Jallo to the barracks.

"The search for Moriba Jallo was begun the same day; and as there were not many Senegalese corporals in the colony, and still fewer who had been badly wounded on the Marne, the Negro was soon discovered and sent in charge of a soldier to the governor's office. The official gave orders for him to be conducted to his room, expecting to see a maimed and broken invalid.

"Into the office walked a gigantic Negro, as sturdy as an oak, with the tattoo-marks characteristic of the Malinki tribe running across his cheeks from the corners of the eyes right to the lips. He was naked except for a scarlet girdle. The official considered the native attentively. Truly the Negro had the marks of terrible wounds on his breast, chest and side, but the black man's body had survived and had been restored to health after returning to its native soil.

" 'You received those wounds in the war?' the official asked.

"The Negro laughed insolently and mockingly, baring his huge white fangs.

" 'Why, yes, monsieur! In the war! It was the enemies of France that tattooed me so beautifully,' he cried in a hoarse voice.

" 'Moriba Jallo,' the official began, 'you were married in France to Mlle. Magdalena Truot?'

" 'Why shouldn't I have got married, when the white women themselves hung around my neck?' he answered, his eyes twinkling insolently.

" 'How do you mean?' the official asked.

" 'I got married there several times over!' laughed the corporal: 'Why, we Negroes can have several wives apiece. I left five in Darghai, why couldn't I leave three in France? They themselves wanted me to marry them. Well, and so I did marry them. Let me have something at least for the blood I poured out in the war. So I made the acquaintance of white women who were eager for Negro love. Ha! ha! ha!'

"He laughed long and shamelessly, but the official raised his voice; so the corporal lapsed into silence and straightened himself up in soldier fashion.

" 'You may get yourself into prison for these tricks of yours, you scoundrel!' the official flung at him in a menacing tone. 'Why did you make yourself out to be a king's son and a Christian to these women?'

"The Negro could not restrain himself, and again burst into a laugh.

" 'I did the same as my white comrades in the hospital. When making up to a woman every one of them used to declare that he was the son of a count. In my filial love I honoured my father with a royal title. . . . And as for Christianity, the whites themselves say that all men are brothers, so I wanted to have white sisters. And as soon as anything happens they drag you to church. That didn't make any difference to me!. A Christian's a Christian!

But at home in the jungle that slips off a man at once, like the polish off a rifle-barrel . . . In the 25th Regiment I ate soup with potatoes and cabbage, but here I have forgotten such food. . . . And the same applies to this God of the whites!'

"He was transported with laughter and turned up the whites of his eyes as he spoke.

"'Did Mlle. Magdalena love you?' asked the official, restraining his anger with difficulty.

"'Didn't she have good reason to?' the corporal exclaimed. 'No white man would have loved her, for she was poor, pale, timid, plain, miserable, lonely. . . . She told me she could not live any longer alone, that she must have a man who could understand her, could say a few sincere words to her! Oh, they're all like that, your white women. You can get them all like that! Sometimes she spent the whole night telling me of her orphaned life, and I only blinked my eyes and smacked my lips and that was enough for her! Once she told the doctor that Moriba Jallo was subtle. Ha! ha! ha! I don't know what that means, but of a certainty it's something good, for from that time the doctor gave orders that I was to receive twice as much food.'

"In his scoffing narrative the savage black man, a shameless good-for-nothing corrupted in Europe, had unconsciously revealed the drama of the lonely women—those continually increasing victims of modern conditions of life and social relations.

"The official realized this and ordered the messenger to inform Mme. Magdalena Jallo that her husband had arrived. She quickly appeared. Without saying a word

she put her arms round the Negro's neck and nestled against him like a little injured child.

"Two distinct emotions struggled for mastery in the soul of the official—a feeling of aversion, of bitterness at the sight of the 'fall' of a white woman, and a profound sympathy for this ugly, sallow-complexioned woman, who was so lonely and so in need of love and friendship that even in this naked, savage corporal of the Senegalese riflemen she discovered traces of a subtility which she was unable to find among white men. Almost fearfully the official awaited some brutal movement or scoffing word from the Negro; but the corporal suddenly assumed a grave expression, stood in a stiff and meditative attitude, and after a while laid his powerful palm on the woman's head.

"A deep silence reigned. The official broke it with a question:

" 'Does madame still wish to live with her husband?'

" 'Oh yes, sir!' the woman exclaimed, nestling against the negro's broad chest.

" 'Corporal Moriba Jallo!' The official turned to the native. 'Did you hear?'

"I heard, monsieur!' came the quiet answer.

" 'Can you support a wife with your own labour?'

"The Negro shrugged his shoulders and muttered:

" 'There is sufficient millet, fonio, beans and oil in the farm for us all. It will only be necessary for us to work harde-. . . .'

" 'I shall work without a pause!' the white woman burst out.

"The official reflected a moment, rubbed his forehead, and in a cold tone announced:

" 'If that is madame's desire and decision I cannot put any obstacle in her way. I must only warn madame that the African climate and the native conditions of existence are murderous for white women.'

" 'I shall bear it all!' said the woman gazing in his eyes. 'I prefer death to my former joyless and friendless life. . . . Never! never!'

" 'In that case,' said the official, 'I shall give orders for madame to be allowed to have porters for carrying a hammock and the baggage. Take this to the office. And now . . . a pleasant journey and good luck!'

"The white woman and the corporal went out. The messenger standing at the door covered his mouth with his hands to hide a smile. The official stared at him and exclaimed abruptly:

" 'I want to see Moriba Jallo by himself for a moment.'

"When the Negro entered, inquiringly examining the official's face, the latter approached him, gazed into his eyes, and bending close to his ear, whispered:

" 'Remember, corporal Jallo, that in the event of anything happening to this woman . . . you go to the galleys, to Cayenne! Remember!'

"Then he thrust him out of the door, and paced a long time up and down his office, muttering:

" 'Accursed life! A criminal civilization! We need a revolution—a revolution to shake everything from top to bottom—society, law, religion, convictions!'

"Soon after sunrise the next day a little caravan set out from the town into the jungle, making for a distant

village. Eight Negroes carried the white woman's hammock, and eight others carried her baggage. The guide was Corporal Jallo himself. He went at the head of the processsion, singing in a moody voice or whistling; he did not approach or speak to his wife at all. Nor did she address any questions to him, but remained in a deep muse. Only after two days did the Negro approach the hammock and start a conversation. He confessed that he was not a Christian, that he possessed five other black wives; but he promised that he would be kind to the white woman and would protect her.

" 'Thank you, Moriba!' she whispered.

" 'There's nothing to thank me for!' the Negro answered. 'I am only afraid of how you'll manage with those other wives . . . for I can't drive them out of the house.'

" 'Of course not!' the woman answered. 'Leave it to me. I'll arrange it all.' She said these words in such a tone of conviction that the Negro was immediately appeased and grew merry. He began to sing and whistle again, but he also paid more attention to Magdalena. In dangerous places or when the porters were descending hills, Moriba supported his wife's hammock; and when crossing the rivers he carried her in his arms, while she gently nestled against his breast.

"When one of the porters burst into a laugh at this and made some brutal remark, Jallo set his wife on a rock emerging from the bed of the river, and approaching the porter, knocked him off his legs with a powerful blow of the fist and plunged him into the water over his head.

" 'Sale nègre!' [1] the corporal muttered contemptuously and menacingly. 'Open your mouth another time!'

"No one attempted to jest about Jallo and his wife during the rest of the journey.

"After some days the couple reached Moriba Jallo's settlement. The five black wives and a crowd of children stared at the white woman—the wife of their husband and father—in silence and astonishment. A moment later a crowd of Malinkis surrounded Jallo's house, gazed long at his new wife, and then began to ask how much Jallo had paid her father and the head man of her village for her, how many children she had, and what things she had brought with her. Moriba laughingly translated these questions to Mme. Magdalena, who laughed also. The Negroes were astonished at every object taken out of the white woman's boxes and baskets, while the black women watched their rival with eyes growing more and more sullen.

" 'I didn't buy them for her; they belong to her, for she bought them herself in France,' Jallo explained, understanding what was going on in the heads of the black women, who were jealous, not for him, but for his munificence. 'Listen! If any one of you does any harm to her—woe to you!'

"As he spoke he bent down and picked up a large heavy macheta from the floor.

"There was no mere threat in his action. The black

[1] "Filthy Negro!" "Stupid Negro!" are common invectives among the natives, who acknowledge the black people to be a lower race. This is confirmed by Negro legends, which speak of the superiority of the white and the red man. Undoubtedly the white invaders, the Sussu-Hyksos and the redskins of Phut brought this contempt with them.

wives and the children and crowd of neighbours all realized that. And as the soldier corporal was feared and respected because he was an old hand and spoke French, Mme. Magdalena was immediately established in a strong and privileged position.

"That very evening the white woman was working with the other wives inside the enclosure, preparing food for the whole family.

"It would be a long story to tell how the European woman passed her life on her Negro husband's farm," said my acquaintance. "Thousands of details, thousands of petty annoyances, compromises, disillusionments, and worst of all arduous labour beyond her strength, and a still more arduous and continual struggle with the climate, with her own growing weakness, with attacks of fever. Then the time for her confinement drew near, and that was a source of terror to Mme. Magdalena. It terrified her not only because she would have no medical aid of any kind, but still more because now for the first time she was troubled by a thought which tortured her with alarm and fear. What kind of child would he be, white or black? At the thought that she might bring a being of black skin into the world a blush of shame and ignominy, a feeling inherited from the white race, suffused the woman's pale, debilitated face. She loved her black husband, and she was not ashamed of him; but she feared, she hated, she felt an unconquerable aversion to the black child which she was soon to bring to birth. She felt that this would be a blow at the prestige and honour of the white race, and she felt it from the very first days of the child's engendering with all her instinct, though

she did not even think of it and possibly was not even able to express in words the emotions which shook her.

"Meantime Moriba Jallo had become very attached to his white wife; he was proud of her, for she had succeeded in raising the welfare of the house and had brought him added respect. Jallo felt happy in the expectation of an heir, and in the child-like mind of that primitive man the thought began to glimmer:

"'If only it were a son! . . . If only a little white boy was born! . . .'

"The corporal now lived in that hope, but he said nothing to anyone.

"It happened that Jallo had to leave home for several days, to take part in the great hunt organized once a year by the population of the entire district. During the corporal's absence a little caravan arrived at the village. The travellers were two Frenchmen: one of them an official from a large neighbouring settlement, the other an agricultural inspector. The inspector immediately demanded to be shown Moriba Jallo's enclosure.

"On seeing Mme. Magdalena he explained that he had been commissioned by the governor's office to visit her, to inquire after her health, and how she found life in a Negro family. The woman was deeply moved by the governor's goodness and the friendliness of the officials, who had expressly made two days' journey in order to visit her. She bustled about, and after a few moments invited the French to table. With burning, vindictive eyes the black wives followed her every movement, then went out, and sitting under the shade of a tree began to

whisper among themselves, laughing and shaking their fists in the direction of the house.

"Meantime Mme. Magdalena, athirst for the society of white men, told the Frenchmen in detail of her former miserable, lonely life and of her present existence, not concealing the fact that she would shortly become a mother. The anxiety and fear which had tortured her so long was revealed in her question:

" 'Can a white child be born of a Negro and a white woman?'

" 'Unfortunately that never happens, madame!' the official answered. 'Therein lies the utter misfortune and ignominy of the woman! . . . Oh, pardon me, madame!' he exclaimed, observing that Mme. Magdalena had suddenly turned pale.

" 'It's nothing . . . nothing!' the woman assured him. 'I am glad you said it; I felt that myself, but I could not put it into words. . . .'

"Despite the attempts of the Frenchmen, after this the conversation flagged and was continually coming to a pause; so the officials took their leave of Mme. Jallo and left the village, declaring that they were in a hurry to get back. Mme. Magdalena was left alone. She sat immobile, shattered, deprived now of the least spark of the hope that had glimmered within her. It seemed to her that the word 'ignominy' was burning on her forehead in flaming syllables, like the sullen stigma of a curse.

"If the religious Frenchwoman, with her simple soul and dove-like heart, had known that she would be mother to a descendant of the God-accursed fratricide Cain, whom the black people regard as their distant forefather,

her soul would have revolted and her heart would have died in the torments of despair. Happily the wife of corporal Moriba Jallo knew nothing of that.

"At the moment when the despairing woman was left without strength to stand, the corporal's five black wives were sitting before the magician in his hut concealed in the dense jungle.

"Without looking the terrible old man in the eyes, and continually fingering in their hands the amulets protecting them against evil spirits, the Negresses told him that their husband had brought a white woman to the settlement; that he preferred her to them; that everything in the house had been changed from the moment when the 'white' had appeared; that Moriba Jallo thought only of her, although she had offended the house fetishes, for she ordered them to be carried out of the hut and they were now standing in an empty barn, while their offering trays had long been empty. They told also, these black women, vindictive and jealous for the regard and the gifts of their husband, that they had heard Moriba Jallo telling the white woman about the wisdom and might of the magicians, telling her of the power of the fetishes; but the white woman had laughed and explained something to their husband which they could not understand.

" 'If it continues further,' whispered the ill-boding and passionate Negresses, 'the inhabitants will not let the magician into the village; they will not bring him millet, rice, meat and dolo [2] ; and the day may even come when they will give him up to the hands of the French, who persecute people who work in the shade. . . . It has

[2] Dolo is a beer made from millet.

already come to such a pass that this very day white chiefs arrived and the white woman was talking to them a long time. . . .'

"Until midnight the black wives of Moriba Jallo whispered, lied and inveighed with words of hatred, till the magician's eyes began to flame and his coarse lips quivered, revealing his large, yellow teeth.

" 'Silence!' he said in a hoarse voice. 'I shall take counsel with the spirits of the jungle!'

"Long he sat sunk in thought over a tiny fire, throwing herbs and pieces of bark on to the coals until the hut was completely filled with smoke.

" 'Draw close to me!' he said at last. 'The spirits have instructed me what we have to do with the white woman. Listen attentively, and remember that if you tell anyone what I have taught you the spirits will strangle you and your children. . . .'

"Six black, benighted heads bent over the fire and counselled long . . . long.

"A week later a young native came running to the village and announced that the hunters would return the same evening. When this news reached Moriba Jallo's hut one of the black wives immediately slipped out and made her way through the jungle, until she came to the path by which the men had to return. Here she hid herself in the bushes and patiently waited. Just after sunset a crowd of men with the corporal at their head emerged from the jungle. His black wife ran to meet him, and taking him aside impetuously whispered to him, until he thrust her off and made with great strides for the village.

"When Moriba Jallo appeared in the hut he was gloomy and scowling. He gazed suspiciously at the sad face of the white woman, and snorting through his nostrils, he threw at her the question:

" 'So you have begun to receive whites in secret?'

"Mme. Magdalena calmly began to explain to him the cause of the officials' arrival; but Moriba Jallo, his passions worked upon by the black wife, grew more and more brutal and overwhelmed the woman with offensive reproaches.

"She began to weep—quietly, helplessly.

"Seeing this, Moriba kicked her with his foot and swore at her, using the most opprobrious word he had picked up on his visits with his comrades in the French towns to the little houses with red lamps and always fast-closed shutters.

" 'I don't believe you!' he roared. 'You must prove that you're innocent!'

" 'I will do all you wish!' the woman sobbed, terrified by the frenzy of the black giant.

" 'Good! To-morrow you shall submit to the magician's test . . . you . . .' And again the disgusting, shameful word fell from his lips.

" 'I am ready for anything!' the white woman whispered, not understanding her husband's words.

"Moriba Jallo ran out of the hut and sped to the magician. He remained seated with him the whole of the night, assisting him in his sombre activities. The magician ground some bark from the 'teli' tree into powder, moistened it all with frothy dolo, and placing it

in a small vessel, covered it with coarse clouts. When the powder had begun to get warm he poured it into another vessel with some fresh beer, threw a pinch of herbs into the liquor, muttered a conjuration, and only then raised his eyes towards the roof. He observed the grey light of the dawn making its way through the crevices.

"'It is time! Come!' he said, rising.

"Carefully carrying the vessel turn by turn, they passed through the bush.

"'If she is innocent, the poisonous "teli" drink will not hurt her; if she has betrayed you she will perish before the dregs of the liquor are dry in the vessel.'

"'But if she is innocent, and the "teli" kills her . . .' Moriba Jallo began, giving voice to the doubt gaining ground within him.

"'The spirits know what is just and what is unjust!' said the magician in a resolute tone, raising his arm above his head. 'The old people know the law of the spirits of the earth.'

"When the magician and the corporal drew near to the hut the sun was high in heaven, and the white woman was bustling about the enclosure.

"'Come here!' Moriba called to her.

She approached without hesitation, unaware of what was to befall.

"'Drink!' the corporal said, handing her the vessel containing the poisonous fluid.

"She gazed into her husband's eyes and silently drank it all to the dregs. Having done so, she went towards

the hut; but at the palisade she tottered, dropped to her knees, and after a moment fell with her face to the ground.

"The magician approached her, turned the motionless body on to its back, saw a thin stream of blood flowing from the mouth, and whispered:

" 'She was guilty. . . . No one saw. . . . Carry the body into the jungle and leave it on the stones of a dry river-bed.'

"Moriba did as the magician advised. As he returned to the village he gazed back continually and listened. Suddenly he shuddered and came to a halt, fixing his eyes on the clear blue, glowing sky. There he saw three moving black specks. With every moment they grew more distinct, until the corporal could discern them clearly. They were vultures, and they circled, puling mournfully, over the spot where Moriba Jallo had laid the body of his white wife.

"The Negro spent the whole day under the palisade of the hut, watching what was happening above the distant jungle. And strange things were taking place there. Great clouds of birds of prey wreathed, circled, dropped to the earth, or fought in the air, tearing the prey from one another and puling, croaking, and whistling with evil voices.

"Night fell, but Moriba still sat on, gazing and listening. The silhouettes of the birds disappeared in the dusk, but for a long time yet their voices were borne to him, and they were stilled only when the laugh of a hyena and the sobbing howl of a jackal came from the direction of the dry river-bed.

"Only then did Moriba Jallo rise from his place. He noticed the heads of his black wives peeping above the hedge, stared into their flaming and inquisitive eyes, and suddenly distinctly heard the words of the official in the governor's office:

" 'Remember, corporal Jallo, that if anything happens to this woman . . . you go to the galleys, to Cayenne! Remember!'

"A terror which nothing could restrain seized the Negro and forced him into flight before the phantom pursuing him. He fled through the jungle, leaping like an antelope over ditches and stones, not feeling the thorns of the lianas that entered deeply into his body or the prickly bushes and sharp stones wounding his feet.

"Moriba Jallo plunged deeper and deeper into the jungle, swam across rivers, and ran, ran towards the saving frontier of the British colony, whence he was never to return to his settlement. For there beside the shade of his murdered white wife stood the monstrous phantom of ill-boding Cayenne."

CHAPTER TEN

CHRIST IN A HOSTILE LAND

I HEARD this tragic story of Mme. Jallo while sitting on the verandah of a hotel in Konakry after supper on Christmas Eve. For between latitudes 8° and 9° N. we did not forget our Polish traditions.

At midnight we went to church. The service was conducted in the churchyard by a bishop of the order of White Friars before a magnificently furnished altar. The churchyard was lit up with festoons of electric lamps, and the dark boughs of mango and orange trees formed a vaulted roof. Crowds of natives in European dress or in new white "bubus" filled the yard. A black organist played on a harmonium, little Negro lads in surplices arranged themselves around the altar, a perfectly conducted choir sang with dignity and pathos, and the crowd accompanied it, repeating the words of the Latin psalms.

The natives prayed ardently, emotionally: some of them from French prayer-books, some fingering rosaries and fixing their burning, devoted eyes on the figure of Christ on a great wooden cross, or on the carved Mother of God of Lourdes standing at His feet. Moved and impressed by the mystery of the moment, the black, white-robed Christian women partook of Communion, falling on their faces before the altar and consuming the

elements of the Body and Blood of God. An exalted atmosphere prevailed: one charged with a mysticism long since forgotten in the temples of civilized countries.

I looked around attentively, studying the crowd, and reflecting who they were that thus humbled themselves before the altar, and what attraction the teaching of Christ had in Africa.

I could understand the thoughts of these women, moved by the acceptance of the visible elements of God. The Crucified One had established a law unknown here—the law that one husband should be joined to one wife until death. Such a law conferred respect on women and assured them of their existence under the roof of their husband's house for all their lifetime. So how could these slave women help loving the Crucified God? How could they dare to refrain from humbling themselves before Him, and from glorifying the name of Him who had called them out of the bondage of their slavish dependence and their defencelessness against the authority of their lord and master?

I could understand the glorification of Christ by this crowd of black men. I did not see here the proud, dignified faces of the elders and descendants of the recently reigning Negro families; I could not observe any representatives of the free, rich farmers and shepherds from the bush of Lower Guinea or the mountains of Futa-Jallon. Here beneath the dark canopy of mango branches, before this altar the former slaves and their descendants who have been outlawed from Negro society were humbling themselves—people homeless and defenceless, whom the Saviour seemed to be endeavouring to

gather with His crucified arms, to shelter to His breast, to soothe with words of consolation and love and to foretell His new coming. The preacher spoke of that coming in a voice menacing and penetrating to the heart and mind, repeating the words of Christ according to the evangelist Luke:

". . . Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. . . ."[1]

These believing crowds of black Christians were receiving the elements of the Body and Blood of the Crucified Saviour, and no one could enter into the secrets of this mystery more profoundly and ardently than they! For had not their fathers done the same, consuming the bloody fragments of human sacrifices offered up in honour of the fruitful goddess, Earth, and joining themselves with her in bonds of blood and in community of spirit?

As it does everywhere throughout the world, the teaching of Christ—teaching for the poor in spirit, the contrite and lowly, the sad and the lamenting, the quiet and humble, the hungerers and thirsters for righteousness—found an echo among the poor, the lowly and the wronged. But the free people of the jungle and the African mountains gather not under the arms of the cross of torture and salvation.

In the mind of the black native Christianity is closely connected with the white man, who possesses terrible, death-dealing fire-arms, who knows how to cut off dis-

[1] Luke ii, 25, 26.

eased limbs without killing the man, can converse over a distance, can remove from place to place without hammock or horses, who is served by carriages without teams to draw them, who can fly in the air, swim across the ocean, bring the lightning and thunder into his service and make slaves of the entire people.

"The Christian Nazarene is a magician and we are afraid of Him!" say the Negro Mussulmans and fetishists. The black tribes fear the Christians, but they also hate them, for they are destroying the entire organism of their traditional society. The first place in this work of destroying the native life is held by the principle of monogamy. This principle connotes the extermination of the black race; for the climate and conditions of life demand polygamy, which is in accordance with the Negro nature, lessens the influence of the high child mortality rate, and covers the need of working hands for field cultivation and for carrying out the heavy duties connected with the household labour.

Even the missionaries perfectly understand this state of things, and certain politicians have now put forward a proposal for the legalization of polygamy among Negroes converted to Christianity.[2]

Other features in Christianity mitigating against its extension in an African environment are the struggle with slavery—on which the whole welfare of Negro families is based—the compulsory equalization of the rights of owner and slave, and finally, the blows dealt by a Christian administration to the authority and influence of the native chieftains.

[2]Senator Wright and others.

All this clears the road for Islam, which carries with it ideas inimical to the white race. Islam bases itself on the aristocratic and influential native families; it recognizes the traditional rulership over slaves and their descendants, supports polygamy and sets up natural legal barriers between free people and slaves.

Islam has already once been triumphant in Africa, in the seventh and eighth centuries of our era, when it fought with this very weapon. For from the second century onward Tunisian Sfax had been a harbour of the Christian Church in North Africa, and the teaching of the Nazarene had been spread farther and farther, penetrating even to the Muluya. But Said Akbar—the apostle of the Prophet, the sword of Allah, the son of the barren, burning desert—came and established the traditional law, comprehensible and indispensable to the black man, and overthrew the cross, with its defence of the weak, the oppressed and the lamenting.

Under such conditions Christian teaching has no future on the black continent. Let the time arrive when all the black slaves who are Christians have become free people and with the aid of European governments have obtained their own land; then infallibly, on becoming independent agricultural proprietors, they will all return to polygamy, to Islam or to the cult of ancestors and fetishes. Similar incidents occur even in our days, and the history of African colonization provides many such instances.

Portuguese religious missions, directed by the diocese of the Cape Verde Islands, were once scattered along the whole Atlantic coast of Africa, and converted upwards of

a million Negroes. To-day the descendants of the black Christians make sacrifices to fetishes, and the houses occupied by the missions and religious schools are falling into ruins, destroyed by damp and the termites.

The missionaries of the various Christian Churches know full well that the fruits of their labour are very friable, and quickly crumble as soon as they cease to be tended with incessant, solicitous care—and it is not always possible and practicable to give them such care.

Only one circumstance affords any hope of the triumph of Christ's teaching, but much water will flow down the African rivers before that time arrives. European civilization will achieve that triumph, if it does not itself perish before then. When medical science reduces the mortality among children to the normal and teaches the population how to struggle with diseases; when technical science has covered the entire continent with a network of railways and motor-roads; when agricultural science has changed the barren earth into fruitful fields and has introduced mechanical ploughs and other agricultural implements into the Negro husbandry, then polygamy and slavery will disappear, then the truly free Negro—whether patrician or plebeian—will undertand Christ's teaching, which blesses not only the weak, oppressed and poor in spirit, but also the powerful yet merciful and the peacemakers; then will the black tribes begin to gather under the crucified arms of the Saviour; for none can feel more deeply than they, with their dove-like, childish hearts and simple minds, the flaming, loving heart of the Son of Man, so dear and clear to them.

I am convinced that while among other races Christi-

anity gave birth to civilization, in Africa civilization will clear the path for the teaching of Christ and will establish it for ever.

We left Konakry at dawn on Christmas Day, travelling eastward towards the Niger. The first large station we came to was at Kindia, in the Futa-Jallon mountains, which surrounded the railway on all sides. Here we suffered a very disagreeable miscarriage of plans, for we were intending to visit the Pasteur Institute close to the station, but it transpired that the train stopped only one hour at Kindia.

We were met on the platform by the assistant director of the Institute, who explained in outline the scheme of research carried out. On our return to Warsaw we received from the Institute its report [3] with a description of the work, which is directed by M. J. Willbert in accordance with the programme laid down by Professor Calmette.

For the investigations living material is provided by monkeys, chimpanzees, guenons, baboons and others. In the Institute's report one reads the names: Luciola, Gertrude, Gison, Butor, Baby, Rosa, Emilia, Hector, Lulu, Tekla, Tonio, Katherine, Juno, Zizi, and so on; and at the side of these names is usually a cross and the words, "Died of tuberculosis."

The names belong to various kinds of monkeys. They are brought from the jungle and subjected to experiments for determining methods of struggle with the terrible disease which decimates both human beings and

[3] *Extrait des Annales de l'Institut Pasteur*, t. XXXIX, p. 641, August 1925.

SENEGAL
SUDAN
PORT. GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
IVORY COAST
FRENCH GUINEA

monkeys. The doctors make injections under the monkey's skin or introduce living cultures of the Calmette-Guerin, or BCG bacteria, into the stomach. The monkeys suffer these operations without displaying any morbid symptoms, and become invulnerable to tuberculosis for at least a year after their application. By repeating the treatment every year it appears that the monkey, and consequently men also, can probably be protected for all time from infection with tuberculosis.

Yet when I looked at our "Kaska," that lovable and clever chimpanzee, the manner of carrying out these experiments seemed to me simply terrible and monstrous. Into one common cage the investigator puts three monkeys, one of them suffering from tuberculosis, a second protected by an injection of BCG, and a third—the "witness," as it is called—a quite healthy monkey, which is not given any injection of the bacteria.

In the report of the Institute I read: "Butor," a four-year-old inoculated chimpanzee, remains in good health until June 15, 1925. Its fellow, "Ida," an eight-year-old chimpanzee suffering with phthisis, died of this disease on November 28, 1924. The tragic "witness," five-year-old "Tekla," died on December 5, 1924, of tuberculosis.

Poor creatures! Martyrs—martyrs for the sake of humanity!

When all the chimpanzees have perished on the sacrificial altar of Science, a grateful humanity should raise a splendid monument in their honour, immortalizing the inexpressible forms, the facial features, the wise yet hopelessly yearning eyes of the "old, former people," as the negroes call these silent martyrs. The monument should

be very handsome and powerful, and the figure of the chimpanzee cast from bronze in an erect posture, with the hand extended in a gentle yet resolute attitude. For it is a strange thing that after a few hours of captivity, and sometimes even immediately, the savage chimpanzee stretches out its hand to man, and gazing inquiringly into the eyes with his yearning pupils, seems to be saying: "Here is my hand! Don't be afraid! I have come in order to bring you aid and to defend you!"

Do they not aid, do they not defend humanity, these Idas, Catherines and Gertrudes, humbly and silently dying in the cages of the Pasteur Institute, yet on a field of battle with the terrible army of tubercular bacteria?

From Kindia to the station of Mamu stretched forests —the true virgin, forest jungle. On the boughs overhanging the railway monkeys were sitting—great brown "kuladieulari," as the Fulahs call them, or "weepers" in the terminology of the French colonists. These were the *Cercopithecus Patas*, the planters' enemies, shameless robbers and bandits who plunder the fields, and when in bands even attack panthers and human beings. On seeing the speeding train these brown monsters angrily shook the boughs and threw pieces of bark or fruits at us.

I was surprised to see such a large number of monkeys close to the railway-line, but I quickly realized that a forest fire had driven them out of the jungle. The forests were ablaze on both sides of the railway. In certain places the flames had already reached the trenches separating the line from the jungle and were consuming the dry grass and the bushes with a crackle. Terrified hares, palm squirrels and other, smaller animals came bursting

out of the brushwood. Amid the smoke, sparks, and flaming fragments of canes and leaves, darted flocks of partridges, guinea-fowl, wild pigeons, and various other birds; and higher above the sea of fire vultures and eagles hovered over the smoke-clouds. They were waiting patiently until the flames, satiated in their lust for destruction, had died out, leaving the corpses of animals and birds on the black, charred earth.

Here for the first time I saw a great[4] black bird with white-tipped wings and a monstrous beak with a horny, hollow excrescence above it, forming a kind of helmet. This probably serves as a sound-box, increasing the power of the call made by this bird. The French colonists call it a "toucan," but it is the great hornbill (*Bucorax Abyssinicus*), a reptile-eater. In Guinea we were told that the hornbill always has two females, which build their nests in the hollows of trees; when the female lays her eggs the male walls her up in the hole, leaving only an opening through which to provide her with food. Several of these birds were fleeing before the fire, flying in the direction of the high peaks rising to the north of the railway. Behind them flew dark-grey birds, with long, heavy beaks which gave an undulating character to their flight. These were also hornbills, only a much smaller variety, the *Lophoceros nasutus*. They are extremely cautious and cunning birds. It is an easy matter to kill the great hornbill, but the smaller ones gave us much trouble before we succeeded in obtaining a specimen for our collection.

In the vicinity of the villages I observed large flocks

[4] About nineteen inches high and nearly four feet long.

of sheep and well-grown, sallow cows and bulls. From the moment that the mountains surrounded us our old acquaintances, the Sussus, disappeared without a trace. The type of houses and of people changed. We were in the country of the Fulahs, invaders who had driven out the Hyksos-Sussus from their mountains and had mastered these expanses of perfect pasturage.

At seven in the evening the train stopped at the station of Mamu, whence we were to travel by motor-car to the north, into the mountains, and then to journey on foot, availing ourselves of hammocks and porters.

We shivered the whole night in our carriage. Our "Kaska" began to sneeze frantically. It was an amazing thing! We had left Konakry in the morning of the same day in a temperature of 97 degrees F. in the shade, while during the evening and night it was hardly 41 degrees F. Our train had slowly and imperceptibly crept up to a height of over three thousand feet. For the first time since we had crossed the line we looked longingly for the sun.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RED ENIGMA

FROM Mamu to Labe we had to travel over ninety miles of splendid motor-road, hewn out of the cliffs of the Futa-Jallon ridge. The forest-covered mountain slopes, the deep ravines with torrents hidden by dense trees and bushes, rejoiced the eye. Frequently bands of green monkeys (*Cercopithecus callitrichus*), or "gokivis" with dogs' heads (*Papio Sphinx*), ran across the road or burst out of the stony plains and fled with amusing leaps. The forests of Futa-Jallon are composed of baobabs, "diolas" (a pseudo-mahogany, the *Khaya Senegalensis*), rosewood, the fan-leaved Borassus palm (*Borassus flabelliformis*), the mangrove-tree (*Rhizophera mangle*), the "bentigue" or wool-tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*), the "teli" or "gre-gre," "sandan," "sili," and other kinds with native names.

In the vicinity of the villages we noticed cotton-fields; there was rice in the humid valleys, but millet remained the universal grain. In several places we saw American ploughs, drawn by tawny or red oxen.

The type of native houses suddenly changed. Judging by the aspect of their buildings—round, close, built of beaten clay, with straw thatches hanging low over the

one entrance to the hut, and that entrance almost always closed—the inhabitants must be distinguished by a distrustful, unfriendly nature and a lack of hospitality. Certainly the villagers did not come near us, while the children fled before us with shouts and whistles.

Like all the African tribes, the Fulah tribe who possess the Futa-Jallon mountains have now lost their primitive type; for during their wanderings, which, so far as one may believe the latest investigations, lasted about twelve thousand years, they have absorbed into themselves the blood and outward characteristics of thousands of tribes belonging to different races.

Some hours later I was sitting before the house of the headman of the Bomboli province, the preternaturally solemn Kierna Suleiman, and I observed him attentively while listening to an improvised violin "recital" given by my wife to an accompaniment on the "koro"—a huge lute of twenty-one strings, like those observable on Egyptian frescoes.

The hospitable chief had a very amusing face, but at the same time it revealed a high type. The light brick complexion, the regular nose and mouth, the prominent forehead and well-formed, oblong cranium were certainly not in the least reminiscent of "negroes," as we usually conceive them. I know hundreds of American negroes, and will warrant to find more typical negroes among them than in the mountains of Futa-Jallon. I am convinced that mulattoes left within the confines of compulsory endogamy very quickly revert to the negro prototype.

"Our fathers ruled over Egypt!" a Fulah prisoner on

the island of Los told me proudly. Then let us seek these survivals of the country of Osiris, Horus and Ra!

Here the legends no longer tell us anything, for they have become a blend of the talk of various other tribes. The cult? The ruthless Koran has cauterized all memories of the sunlit divinities of the Nile Valley. "Allah is God, and there are no other Gods above Allah, nor ever have been!" say the faithful Fulah Moslems.

The art of the Futa-Jallon mountaineers provides the first indications. Carvings and pictures on couches and walls, and the designs of coloured mats skilfully woven from raffia fibre, recall Egyptian designs.

The dresses of the Fulah women are Egyptian "kalaziris" down to the last detail, while the coiffure imitates the Egyptian head-dress, the perukes, and the Babylonian ceremonial coiffures. The name of the Futa-Jallon mountains calls to mind the name of the people of Phut who dwelt thousands of years ago in Egypt, whence they were driven out by one of the Pharaohs, on whom his grateful subjects conferred the nickname of the "white bull" who forced the people of Phut to flight. . . . The name of the Fulah tribe sounds like the Egyptian "fellah."

But how many barely discernible traces one can find along the historical path of a people pressing from the east to the west! What spacious fields for conjectures, hypotheses and fantastic guesses!

Nevertheless the most exuberant imagination will not outstrip the facts which scrupulous scientists have deciphered from the remains of long-dead peoples, from inscriptions left on the walls of temples, pyramids and

tombs, on the rolls of papyri hidden in coffins containing the mummies of the rulers, leaders and princes of the country of the god Ra; what they have deduced from the methods of hewing and the disposition of stone blocks in ancient edifices originating from the earliest times; what they have heard in the tones of the various speech of tribes scattered over the face of the earth; what they have conjectured, gazing at the shards of utensils discovered in the depths of the soil; what they have wrested from the mysterious features of statues of gods and goddesses; what they have elicited from the refractory and clumsy drawings and signs carved in the rocks or painted with the aid of red ferruginous earth by the cave-people, or by races hiding in the deep ravines and mountain crevices from the pursuit of the invaders.

This is the most beautiful and most fantastic of romances, one vivid with the true and historic tragedy of rise and fall, of power and misery, of lust of the flesh and impulse of the spirit, of heavenly divinity and monstrous dragon crawling over the earth!

The noble red skin of the Fulahs, the Peuhls and a whole series of smaller tribes descended from these purest of the red-skinned people endues them with respect among the black races, for it is the mark of the rulers —the regal purple; while the names, "Koron," "Ar," "Har," "Oule," "Ou," have remained the distinction of the ruling families, who are descendants of the red people.

Out of the dusk of ages emerge gigantic historical pictures of peoples struggling for their existence through twelve thousand years without cessation.

Chased by some monstrous powers of earth, ocean, or

heaven, the enigmatic Atlantides and the Misraic descendants of Cush pass across the entire north of the black continent, spreading destruction and death, until they begin to struggle with the warriors of Egypt.

Scientists [1] have discovered the skulls and bones of these invaders in the Canary Islands, in Kabilia, in Corsica, and the south of Europe; so they came from the west, flowing in two streams to the east and north-east, leaving behind them megalithic buildings lasting till our day. But the father of the Misraic peoples was Asia —the shred of earth and primeval mother of man bounded by Mesopotamia and the Red Sea.

When and for what reason did the descendants of Cush, the "son of Cain," start on their wanderings to the Atlantides, to borrow from them their red skin and a civilization unknown in the east?

These red-skinned peoples, given the name of Phut by the Egyptians, long sojourned within the frontiers of the empire of the Pharaohs, troubling the true rulers of Thebes and even the dominating dynasty of the Hyksos shepherd-kings. The soldiers of the "sons of the sun," in whose crowns were the insignia of the serpent and the bird,[2] struggled against them, and in the course of time drove them out of Egypt in large numbers. They could not go to the east to Syria and Palestine, for thence the Hittite peoples were advancing to menace the Egypt of Seti I and Rameses I, the Pharaohs who were jointly reigning in Thebes and Tanis. So they made their way

[1] Quatrefages and Hamy.

[2] The god Ra (the sun) was represented by the form of a man with the head of an eagle and with a nimbus composed of a sun and a serpent.

to the west. There they fell in with negro tribes, to whom they brought the Egyptian symbols of the deified birds and the sign "Ou," or "Oua," giving these black peoples the name of Oua, mingling with them in bonds of consanguinity, and pushing on to the west.

In their wanderings the red-skins overtook the royal Sussus, the people of the serpent, and again there followed fresh crossings between the red and white races. Beyond Upper Atlas the people of Phut met with tribes of the sign Ma, or fish. These were people arrived from Asia in immemorial ages, possibly Hittites or Syrians, who acknowledged the cult of the goddess Ma with lions resting on her shoulders: the goddess honoured with the sacrifice of male circumcision, the sacrifice of virginity and the bloody sacrifice of the first-born son slain on her altar.

The Hittites could easily have passed to Africa through Egypt, for they were a numerous, well-organized and powerful people. They had more than once made attacks on the Nile Valley, certainly before the seventeenth dynasty, and in the time of Rameses these invasions had become a real disaster, described in a poem by the Egyptian Pentuer-Ramesseid. The people of Kheta or the Hittites had reached a high level of culture similar to the Assyrian and Egyptian cultures; they possessed writings, still undeciphered, and powerful cities: Carchemish, Kadesh, Sinjirly and Arzava. One of the Pharaohs addressed a letter to the ruler of Arzava which the Norwegian scientist, J. A. Knudtson, has attempted to decipher. In his extremely absorbing work, *Die Zwei Arzava Briefe*, published in Leipzig, Knudtson comes to

the conclusion that the Hittites were Aryans, and finds a similarity between their speech and the Armenian, Lithuanian, Slavonic and Greek tongues. In this letter from Arzava the Norwegian scientist has discovered many expressions which we find among the negroes of the sign Ma, and among others the famous "ar," "har," "gara," which signifies "her—hero—ruler"; whence essentially it is but one step to the regal purple, to the designation of the red man as king.

As for the goddess Ma, who is also called "Amma," her name is to be found in the names of various negro tribes who use the sign Ma, or fish, and totems representing the water monsters, the crocodile and hippopotamus. It seems to me that the sign Ma is not to be regarded as belonging to a fish or to other amphibious animals, but rather to the symbols of this Hittite goddess, whom the negroes later identified with these animals, as in Egypt the god Ptah became incarnated in the bull of Apis. These Asiatic fish symbols were known in Babylon, where they were attached to the god Ea, and in Phoenicia and Syria to the goddess Athargatis-Derkhato. The first Christians used the sign of the fish as the token of membership of the association which was the apostolic church, but they borrowed this token from an Asiatic source.

Fresh blood flowed into the veins of the former allies of the red-skinned Atlantides, and fresh tribes were formed who, however, were mindful of the "Koron" and the "gara," those colourful totems signifying the regal purple. Certain of these tribes adopted from Phut the honour of the female divinities, others the worship of the male divinities; certain of them resigned themselves

to the symbol of the bird, others to the symbol of the fish or serpent, thus acknowledging one or the other kinship of tribes expressed by the sounds "ar," "gara," "har," "sar," "mar," which testify to their descent from the red-skinned rulers.

Uniting with other tribes or struggling against them, the people of Phut pushed on and on until they reached the mountains, gave them their own name of Phut, and drove thence the "people of the serpent," the Sussus, regarding themselves as "people of the bird"—Pul, Peuhl, Ful, Fulah.

But why did these red-skin tribes push farther on, so far that they are to be found even to the south and east of Lake Chad? For surely they were not seeking pasturage for their herds in these barren expanses? And yet they have remained there till this day, and they emerge from the midst of the ant-hill of black races like oases in the desert.

Is this not another ramification of the Egyptians of Phut, another of their streams flowing to the heart of Africa by a quite separate course? Is this phenomenon not the result of the great revolt of the red-skin warriors in the times of the Pharaoh Psammetichus? This ruler offended his subjects by conferring particular privileges on the mercenary soldiers, and then 240,000 born red-skin warriors, fighting under the symbol of the sacred bird Horus, raised a rebellion and began an advance to the south, towards the source of the Nile, into the heart of the black continent. The terrified Psammetichus sent trusted envoys to them to dissuade the insurgents from their intention of abandoning the country for ever by

reminding them of their forsaken household hearts and wives; but brandishing his sword, their leader exclaimed:

"Tell the son of Ra that with our swords we shall win new homes and new wives for ourselves!"

These emigrants speedily disappeared in the depths of Africa, in the sea of black races. Was it not they who, leaving behind them outposts defended by red-skin warriors, began to push towards the west from the source of the Nile and the great western lakes, until they united with the mountain people of Phut, bringing with themselves the cult of Horus, of the divine Ptah, the ruler of Memphis, the god of earth reborn in the bull of Apis?

Of course, the places and times of adoption of the bird and fish symbols would indicate the road by which the red race came to Africa. However, we see the red Peuhls scattered from the eastern shores of Lake Chad as far as the Atlantic, and certain East African tribes and Asiatic peoples speaking a related tongue; this justifies us in seeking the fatherland of the Phuts, and therefore of the Peuhls and Fulahs on the opposite shore of the Red Sea, or at least in Egypt.

Such is the red enigma of the black continent; and the mysterious modern bearers of this enigma, the Peuhl and Fulah natives, crowded around us when our motor-cars stopped by the wells, or as we stood in the enclosures of local potentates—so magnificent and dignified, majestically leaning on staffs . . . king-priests, possibly Pharaohs, sons of Ra, priests of Osiris, Horus and Ptah.

Only a few miles separated the village of Bomboli from the residence of the French administrator in the settlement of Pita. Here the wife of the absent official, Mme.

Albert, who received us very hospitably, showed us the negro manufacture of starch and mandioc and also ropes made from the fibre of the sizal or agava cactus, called "pita," from Spain. In the West African colonies we frequently saw large plantations of this plant, which furnishes strong fibres from which material suitable for sacks and sails can be woven.

Thence we had a fairly long journey to Labe, the chief administrative centre of the entire province of the same name. Towards evening our cars, driving round a circular plot of flowering shrubs, drew up before the very picturesque residence of the Maugins.

M. Jules Maugin was an experienced colonial official, knowing the negroes and their country as he knew his own house. This I discovered during our very first excellent dinner in the pleasant company of the witty M. Maugin and his charming wife. We felt at once as though we were among old friends. It was a very fortunate circumstance for us, for we had to spend several days in Labe.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IN THE FUTA-JALLON MOUNTAINS

THANKS to the good offices of the administrators, MM. Maugin, Filatriau and Brulé, we made a very instructive expedition along the ridge of the Futa-Jallons. We did not visit the famous and picturesque waterfalls on the road, but as at this season of the year water is everywhere almost completely dried up we begrudged any time spent in turning aside and seeing the dry beds of waterfalls.

Our journey through the Futa-Jallon mountains covered nearly four hundred miles. Here we got to know the population of various districts, governed by the local princes: Kierna, Suleiman, Mori Tonu, Alpha Amadu Bailo and Alpha Amara. These princes are descendants of the former reigning families, whom the population regard with respect; for the red skin of these rulers holds the place of the magnificent regal purple in the eyes of the natives. Of recent times the French administration has realized that it is not possible to diminish the authority of these descendants of former rulers with impunity, and they endeavour to maintain them in the status of directors of the province, depriving them of this dignity only if they pursue activities hostile to

France. These regional chiefs are invaluable assistants to the French administrators in the extension of civilization, which for the time being finds expression exclusively in the application of new agricultural systems and in the enrolling of the native youth in the French schools at Konakry and Dakar, where the men are trained to be minor officials, doctors, nurses, technical engineers and artisans, and the women to be midwives.

The Fulah princes, or "almami," as they are called, are affluent, and dwell outside the bounds of their village capitals. Their residences consist of very densely populated special settlements which are circumscribed either by a wall or by a quickset hedge. In addition to the large huts of the rulers we saw a number of others, inhabited by the wives, each of whom has her own house, and by the kinsmen of the ruler and of his first wife, the servants, the male and female "griots" and slaves.

Each wife has a definitely appointed day on which the husband spends his whole time with her. Woe to the husband if, through inattention, indifference or thoughtlessness he infringes the order of his conjugal obligations; then there are scenes in the home, intrigues and reprisals, and sometimes even crimes are committed. The wife to whom the day and night of her husband and lord belongs is obliged to take charge of the household for the day, preparing the food for the whole house under the supervision of the first wife. For although sometimes she has been abandoned long since, the first wife holds firmly in her own hands the reins of government of the entire residence, and often all her husband's affairs as well.

The food is served in a certain order of etiquette; first of all the ruler eats alone, or in the company of his closest friends and kinsmen of the male sex; then the wives; after them the relations, then the sons, then the daughters, after which come the servants of free rank, the "griots," and finally the slaves. At a banquet the ruler sometimes eats and drinks from special vessels which no one else may use—a survival from ancient times when the head of the household was simultaneously regarded as a priest. This view of the father of the family has also been preserved among the fetishist tribes. The food supplied for dinner and supper is the same for everybody. There are various kinds of groats (kus-kus), and rarely ox or sheep's flesh or domestic fowls. It goes without saying that the road from the ruler's table to the slave's straw mat is fairly long, and so the finest parts of the food do not reach the descendants of the former slaves. However, one must say that the masters never leave these labourers, indispensable as they are for the welfare of the whole family, without sufficient food; and so they are always thrown something from the larder—pea-nuts, millet, rice and vegetable oil.

Of the whole entourage of the ruler one category of the boarders is never given cause for umbrage in regard to the quantity and quality of their food. I refer to the "griots" or jesters, the minstrels, the dancing men and women.

If something causes them dissatisfaction they compose an extemporized song, in which they rail at domestic parsimony, ascribing this niggardly trait to their own lord, and the whole court, the whole village begins clan-

destinely to hum the new melody or to pass from mouth to mouth the latest joke about the descendants of the red kings. The wives fear this, for it sometimes leads to a divorce; the rulers tremble before it, for to be laughed at signifies the loss of unbounded influence over thousands of subjects. And that is a disaster, for the French authorities may remove such an incapable governor.

The "griot" caste is quite an old Negro tradition, but originally the conception was carried here from Asia, where similar groups exist.

The Negro community has preserved its patriarchal organisation. At its head is the royal family, which among the Fulahs enjoys the title of Modi, Tierno, or Alpha. The free people are vassals of these families, and form various castes or belong to families occupied in agriculture and cattle-raising. The slaves, the true descendants of the former prisoners of war, form a third group. They are born, grow up, and die in the houses of their lords. The treatment of the slaves is wholly good, and a descendant of a former prisoner may redeem himself by paying a certain ransom or by taking on the execution of a certain task—hewing down part of the jungle and preparing a new field for millet, for example. However, the slaves very rarely avail themselves of this right, for at present the state of freedom does not entitle them to any privileges. Inter-related families have the service of communal "totems," the tribes have their "diamu"; sometimes castes also possess their "diamu" or special names and their own "totems."

The "totem," or "ntene," or "tana," or in the Fulah tongue "voda," is a kind of family coat-of-arms. Many works have been written about totems and totemism, and attempts have been made to treat the subject from various aspects, quite fantastic conclusions being sometimes reached. Perhaps I may be allowed to express my own opinion, based on a conversation with a certain mulatto, the son of a Frenchman and a Negress of the Baga tribe, and educated in a French school—a man who had read and thought a great deal.

My acquaintance began:

"The first inhabitants of this earth dwelt in caves. To them everything around was unknown, terrifying and powerful: frenzied torrents and rivers flooding huge expanses of country; monstrous, dangerous beasts in the rivers and forests; reptiles and rapacious birds. Among these were also some which immediately came to man. There were goats, the female buffalo with her young calf, the dog, various fowls, such as the guinea-fowl, the duck, the goose and the rock-hen. There were animals and birds which assisted the cave-man in his hunting expeditions into the heart of the country. The 'honey-bird' indicated to him the holes where the bees had gathered their honey; the 'mama diabi' bird warned him against poisonous snakes; the green snakes killed the poisonous lizards, spiders and scorpions; the hyena announced the flooding of the rivers; the eagles and vultures conducted him to where herds of antelopes were grazing; the green and blue thrush showed him the hidden springs of water; the white heron defended his cattle

from worms; the manatee and caiman served to counsel him where he was to lurk with a harpoon for the schools of great fish. . . .

"As primitive man pondered on these things, sitting inactive by his fire and through the opening of his cave watching the grey curtain of falling rain in the rainy season, after a time he began with coal or red earth to draw on the walls of his shelter the uncouth forms of the huge lion, the spotted leopard, the powerful python or the wild buffalo, and he felt a mystical dread of their strength and fury; later he began to mould clay images of these terrifying animals, and when going to the jungle he took these images with him to frighten away the evil brutes and to defend him against them. So the evil spirits were born, the jinns . . . the first paganism, the first amulets and first conjurations.

"With the good animals it was easier. When going to hunt, the cave-man called to them, muttering:

" 'Come, good friendly beasts, aid me and defend me against danger, against the power of the evil jinns!'

"Thus arose the first Olympus of divinities, of bright and good and dark and evil gods. How many ages man existed in this state, and what new gods he introduced into his Olympus from the animal and vegetable world no one will ever unriddle.

"However, with the passing of time the cave-man acquired a new power which filled his heart with supreme terror and gripped him with a shudder. At night, as he slept a stony sleep, he was visited by dreams: he saw his father and his grandfather, saw him who had been

the head of the family and lived on in the stories handed down from descendant to descendant; after a moment they vanished, and their place was taken by inimical monsters; then he saw himself in the jungle and in his hut, and he was dismayed in the presence of the greatest of all mysteries—the greatest because it has endured till our times without removing the veil from its menacing countenance. The cave hunter and fisher realized that life and death are brother and sister; for he who was alive and gazing at that very moment into the flaming household hearth, during the night had divided himself into two and had associated with his dead forefathers. And they had spoken to him and given him counsel; but later they had abruptly changed: they had been transformed into the bodies of beasts and birds, and in the spot where he had had intercourse with them stood a tawny lion—a nocturnal phantom, a new embodiment of his being. He remembered it all exactly and did not forget, for these dreams were repeated more and more frequently and distinctly. . . .

"This was a revelation for the cave-dweller of the earth; this was the period when philosophy and religion were born. For man realized that everything, including himself, is connected by a chain of reciprocal transformations occurring in an infinity of forms and times. The 'honey-bird' might be his mother, he himself the lion before whom trembled the hunter struggling against the monsters with slings made from lianas and strips of raw hide.

"The cult of ancestors and the first totem appeared; for now the cave-man assumed the name of the lion, and

he began to paint his symbol—a ring with four points to represent the head of a lion—on his chest and arms. The children of the lion-man, and the children of those children, and the grandchildren of their grandchildren carried this proud emblem of birth into the boundless distance, where the fates of generations and tribes were hidden. . . .

"Thus it was among all the peoples of the earth!" the mulatto continued. "One might have thought that only the noble beasts would have achieved the honour of becoming totems, but then that would have been contrary to the functions of the totem. We know of many periods and details in the history of Egypt when the high-priests and the Pharaohs dreamed of their gods, who were transformed into animals and birds not always heroic and noble. Am I not right?"

Truly the mulatto was right, for the Sphinx of Karnak has the head of a sheep, Ta-Urt that of a crocodile, Serke the body of a scorpion, Ra and Horus the features of an eagle and a small sparrow, Bast the head of a cat, Thoth that of an ibis, Set that of an eagle, Sebek and Anubis that of a dog, Kert that of a hippopotamus. I remembered the Hindoos, whose Hanuman, the god of wind, possesses the form and face of a red ape, while Vishnu has the body of a fish. I remembered the Yakouts, who regard geese, storks and ravens as totems; the Orochons and Golds, who worship the spirits of their ancestors in magpies, ravens and thrushes. I know that the Thibetans regard themselves as descended from an ape and a maiden of princely family; the Mongols hold themselves to be related with fish and water-fowl; the gipsies call

themselves "Calia," [1] which means "black," and which exactly corresponds to the "black snake-demon" overcome by Krishna.

There is no doubt whatever that the custom of tattooing the body is closely connected with totems. Originally the totem was tattooed in its entirety, as we know from the records of the North American redskins; but with the course of time the figure of the totem became symbolic. In Africa I saw tattooed signs like forks crossed by two dashes, which signified a crocodile with open jaws; I also saw double forks crossed with one line, which represented a fish with a tail and two fins. These signs were very reminiscent of our European runes. Are not the runes totemic signs? If that were so, heraldry would receive a further historic and genetic elucidation. And the knightly helmets with bull's horns, the skins of bears, panthers and lynxes, the drawings of animals on the shields of warriors: may they not have a connection with the totem conception?

We hunted with the wearers of totems—the Fulah hunters—in the Futa-Jallon mountains. They are enthusiastic marksmen, usually possessing bows and poisoned arrows, but frequently also having huge falconets of tenth and even eighth calibre, flint-guns loaded with fragments of old iron. Our hunting in these densely populated regions, and especially the deafening tam-tams which almost continually accompanied us, beggared description. We shot small red antelopes (*Cephalophus rufilatus*) and the related dark-grey antelopes (*Cephalophus dorsalis*) with short legs. The males and females

[1] André Lefevre, *La Religion.*

of both these kinds are armed with horns, only with the difference that the males have these weapons adorned with ring-shaped excrescences, while the females have smooth, conical and extremely sharp horns. We also came across the *Cephalophus Maxwelli,* which the Europeans call the swine antelope, because of the animal's characteristic movements. This, however, does not prevent the Negroes regarding it as a fetish; from its run the magicians predict the future; the skins are used as medicine for various illnesses and as material for amulets; the powder from its horns is famous as a potent remedy for sterility in human beings and domestic animals; and the Moslem marabouts use these graceful horns as cases in which to keep verses of the Koran: an amulet which brings happiness to its owner.

On the road we shot bustards (*Neotis Denhami* and *Trachelotis senegalensis*), partridges with red legs (*Francolinus ashantensis*) and black legs (*Francolinus bicalcaratus*), common quails (*Coturnix coturni*), rock-cocks (*Ptilopaphys fuscus*) with rose-coloured beaks and legs, guinea-fowl (*Numida meleagris*), water-cocks (*Limnocorax niger*), crowned cranes (*Balearica pavonina*) and hares with small heads and short legs (*Lepus capensis* or *Lepus ochropus*).[2]

From Labe we set out at the head of a whole caravan composed of some seventy porters carrying our hammocks and baggage. Each porter can carry on his head

[2] The zoological nomenclature is given according to the official edition of Dr. Ch. Maclaud's work, *Notes sur les mammifères et les oiseaux de l'Afrique Occidentale,* Paris, 1906, and on the basis of indications from the Museum of Natural History in Paris (African Section).

not more than fifty-six pounds, so we had to make a general rearrangement of our baggage. The oversight of the porters was undertaken by a supervisor—a tall and strong negro of the Malinki tribe, with handsome tattooings all over his face. Another superintended the baggage, and a third went on in front, engaging and organizing lodgings for the night in the caravanserais, or inns, built by the French authorities and maintained and staffed by the chiefs of the villages. These inns were ordinary Negro huts, very clean and well kept. At the side of the huts were a kitchen and a hut for the travellers' escort and servants. As we had three soldiers and three Negroes engaged to do the work of cook and waiters, we had our own people always at hand.

The petty king of Labe, the grey-haired and dignified Mori Tonu, spent two days in conducting us to the very frontier of his province, arranging magnificent, tumultuous tam-tams, parades of "griots," and ovations from the population, and other diversions in our honour. Such a furious dust was raised at such times that only a sense of the dignity of white people prevented our giving way to an incessant sneezing and so affronting the ceremonial hospitality of the Fulahs. But we saw all that is to be seen in this sphere of the native life.

Taking our leave of king Mori Tonu, our caravan made its way to the north towards the settlement of Tuga, where the residence of the administrator, M. Filatriau, was situated.

Not far beyond Labe changes in the flora indicated that we were entering the Sudan zone. Here and there we met with the "camel orange" bushes, covered with the

small golden fruit sought after by the "ship of the desert"—a plant I had seen during my travels through North Africa—a dense undergrowth of dwarfish doum palms, little mimosa groves and bare "gundy-guli" trees with large green fruit, like oranges and certain cacti.

On the high plateaux of the mountain ridge anæmic forests stretched for huge distances. They had a northern appearance, with slender, bandy trees and a dense undergrowth of prickly bushes. Only occasionally would a remarkable tree strike the eye. Absolutely bare of leaves, with branches crooked and bent, the bark bristling with sharp rings and excrescences and recalling the skin of a crocodile, these trees were covered with large scarlet flowers. These fleshy flowers flamed out against the plain yellow-grey background of the mountain bush, drawing the eyes of the travellers and attracting butterflies and swarms of bees. The latter, however, were infrequent at this season.

These were silk-cotton trees (bombax), which yield fruit like large, long nuts. More than once I saw a ripe fruit fall to the ground and burst with a loud crack, and then a white spot like a heap of glittering snow blossomed on the earth. It was vegetable silk: fine, silvery-white filaments of capok, which is used in Europe for stuffing mattresses and pillows. The capok fibre sets up an extremely dangerous inflammation of the eyes, and owing to its highly combustible nature it sometimes causes fires. I tried twice to set a capok wad afire with a spark struck from a flint, and was successful each time. Various parts of the silk-cotton tree are used like the baobab in native medicine for dysentery, lung diseases and malaria.

The farther we travelled to the north, the more frequently we met with gloomy plateaux, covered with a scanty undergrowth of bushes emerging from the rubble of red disintegrated laterite rocks. It seemed to me that before us was a lunar landscape: the landscape of a dead planet where the plants—contorted, crooked and dwarfish, but enduringly clinging to the stones with their roots—still struggled for existence, eating into the stones with their juices and producing from them a fertile glebe. Here and there gaudy clumps of bright yellow flowers growing straight out of the earth on short, thick, leafless stalks emerged from between the stones and coarse sand.

On these desolate uplands jackals and hyenas are to be found. At first sight one involuntarily wonders how these rapacious animals live.

These expanses are covered with millions of termite mounds stretching often for miles as far as the eye can reach. Wherever we found them we noticed a large number of lairs belonging to small rodents, mice and rats, with the large "robber rat" (*Cricetomys gambianus*), the size of a rabbit, at their head. These animals all attack the termites' storage chambers and spread devastation in them. The robber rat would seem to be particularly injurious. The Negroes call it "Niéné Balé," and when they catch it alive they organize a bloody spectacle. They hang the rat by its tail to a branch in such a fashion that it can only just touch the ground with its claws. Unable to stand on the ground, the rat swings about until it goes mad and bites off its own paws. This has become a traditional custom among the natives, for

they hate the terribly noxious animal and consider that the soul of a criminal is incarnated in it. The criminal was some potentate who unjustly accused his wife of treachery and cut off her hands; and now the unfortunate "Niéné Balé" does penance for that jealous villain. Man always succeeds in planting his own guilt on others!

Here we met with the large and deep lairs of the porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*) and also of the earth-pig, a devourer of ants and termites. The burrows of the earth-pig are several yards deep, and hidden in the grass they constitute a dangerous impediment to the traveller and hunter. The Fulahs hunt these animals because they possess mysterious magical properties; for, like true Negroes, although the mountaineers have accepted the teaching of Mohammed they have remained superstitious. The flesh of the earth-pig is not good to eat, and the aristocracy hands it over to the slaves, retaining for themselves only the right paw of the animal.. Dried in the sun it forms a talisman, restraining the wind and storms, nullifying the effect of poison and protecting from small-pox.

The seemingly barren mountain highlands are abundant in various animals, so the rapacious jackals and hyenas had sufficient food hidden in the bush and inaccessible ravines. In the more fertile localities we saw various kinds of small antelopes and numerous birds.

On December 31, 1925, we arrived at the village of Tangali, and decided to see the new year in at the local caravanserai. From our steel chests we drew out not only bottles of red Bordeaux wine but also a bottle of champagne; we decorated our temporary camp with

Polish and French flags, and adorned the table with flowers; and when our old curmudgeon cook, Mamon, handed round the usual supper, consisting of chicken in various disguises, tinned green beans and some stodgy pudding, our new year banquet was completely arranged. We toasted the prosperity of Poland, peace on earth and the happiness of our friends.

On this occasion "Kaska" tried champagne for the first time, and seemed to betray a great inclination towards the aristocratic liquors. Such a child, and already she could recognize the champagne labels! The negroes regaled us with honey, and on going to the village we saw a number of straw and bark beehives placed in the trees.

Our "defence," the military escort, were billeted in a separate hut. I went along to them, and then for the first time I noticed that they had women with them: One was an ebony-black Negress of the Malinki tribe, with a fine turban on her head, the other a bronze Peuhl, with sorrowful face and dreamy eyes. She was quite comely, graceful and lissom.

"Where are these beautiful ladies from?" I asked jestingly.

"They are our wives!" the black officer answered, coming to attention. "They are travelling with us, only you did not see them earlier because they leave before the caravan sets out. We were afraid you would be against it!"

"I don't mind," I answered. "But why do you compel these ladies to travel hundreds of miles with you? It must fatigue them."

"We prefer them to feel tired to having to tire our-

selves searching for them. If they were left at home they would run away with others," the supervisor informed me.

"Yes! that's reason enough!" I remarked, mentally noting that these ebony and bronze beauties were not over reliable or worthy of confidence. I looked at them curiously; but the women's faces were expressionless, and their eyes veiled with mystery.

Travelling seventeen to twenty miles daily, we arrived at Tuga, where administrator Filatriau met us with a clamorous tam-tam directed by King Alpha Amadu Bailo's "griots"—huge, corpulent giants who sang and played on various instruments.

We were very comfortably accommodated in airy houses, with verandahs looking over a spacious depression of land divided by a river which had two names at once, and which ran from the heights of the neighbouring forested mountains. Clean and carefully kept, the houses were as usual swarming with termites and ants under the foundations, while in the crevices between the boards of the ceiling and in the straw roof were huge and obviously poisonous spiders—poisonous because one of these bandits bit our "Kaska" below the right eye.

Great God! what a sight our rearling was! Her eye swelled and the face contorted—a perfect specimen of a drunkard after a night's scrimmage in a public-house! We made compresses and dressings for the little chimpanzee, and we ourselves were taught by her experience to sleep under nets.

Administrator Filatriau was a widower; he had lost his wife a year before, and his four little children were

being brought up in France. He was quite alone in Tuga, and there was not a European within less than four days' march. The peaceful, very picturesque Tuga district was a dangerous place for a solitary man, for here one's mind could easily become preoccupied with extremely sombre thoughts. Fortunately the administrator had been living in Tuga only a few days, so he was not feeling the murderous effects of solitude as yet, especially as our arrival brought him some diversion, and the Maugins were expected to arrive any day with a doctor and two officers to raise a levy of recruits for the colonial troops.

"But later, later . . . I shall be left alone—absolutely alone!" the administrator said to me, and in his voice was a note of alarm.

Meantime, while conducting us around the settlement and the locality, the administrator himself made the acquaintance of his new outpost. One day a court was held; I was present at the trial. A middle-aged female slave accused her master of refusing to pay the thirty francs he had promised her for caoutchouc supplied.

"I am a slave, and so my lord has done me an injustice," said she in an indifferent tone, sitting on the floor before the table of the man who was administrator and judge in one person.

"France does not recognize slavery," M. Filatriau declared. "You are free; you can go where you like; you can hire yourself out to another man. I shall give you a document immediately showing that you are free, and no one can force you to work further for your former master."

"Oh! I don't want that!" the woman answered. "I was born, I grew up, I have become old, and I shall die in the house of my master. I only want to get the thirty francs, because I and my children have earned them gathering caoutchouc in the bush."

"Go and tell the man whom you are accusing to come here," said the administrator.

After a while a Negro came to the door and halted in a very timorous attitude.

"Did this woman earn her thirty francs?" asked M. Filatriau.

"Yes. . . ."

"Has she been paid that sum?" the administrator further asked.

"Yes! But the boy whom I instructed to give her the money has run away," the Negro grumbled, while the interpreter translated his words.

"Can you find that boy and take the money from him?"

"I can."

"Then run and bring me the whole amount before sunset, and I shall hand it myself to this woman, who is not your slave, for France does not recognize slavery," the administrator repeated with emphasis.

"Good, chief!" the negro answered.

Half an hour later he entered the office and handed over the thirty francs alleged to be recovered from the boy. The money was handed to the woman.

"Are both of you satisfied?" M. Filatriau asked, to reassure himself.

"Yes!" answered the negro and the slave woman.

"Then return to your home in peace!" said the administrator. "But you, woman, remember that if this man wrongs you again I shall think he regards you as his slave. I shall protect you, but he will go to prison. Good day!"

During our stay in Labe and Tuga a levy of recruits was made. On the order of the French authorities, the local kings, officially called the chiefs of the provinces, gathered the youth of service age from the villages of their districts. The young Negroes presented themselves very willingly and in large numbers, for they are attracted by the gay uniform of the Senegalese riflemen, the possession of a real weapon, the possibility of a little war, and also to some extent by old soldiers' stories of what they have seen and experienced in Europe, or at least in such large towns as Dakar, Bamako, Waghadugu and Bingerville.

However, the majority suffered a disappointment, for the young lieutenant and his sergeant assistant examined the candidates for defenders of France very closely. Those who were accepted could not contain themselves for joy, and their pride grew from hour to hour. The height of their happiness was reached at the moment when, standing dressed in light sand-coloured trousers and jackets, they were supplied with broad, brilliant scarlet belts and fezes of the same colour. When, swathed in several folds of red material and crowned with red caps, they stood in rank, joy and pride beamed from their black and bronze faces, and they gazed silently at one another with mutual dignity and respect. If their rela-

tions approached them to ask a question the coloured soldiers negligently and indulgently condescended to give curt, expressive answers.

Two hunts were organized for us in the Tuga district. Although upwards of a thousand beaters took part in them, we did not see any animals except green monkeys and baboons. The Negroes, who were armed with bows, spears and firearms, shot a little wild wart-hog with a repulsive snout, also a couple of small antelopes and partridges—not to mention one lad, who got some small shot in the nose from the Negro headman. But we only saw monkeys.

That was not an animal to arouse a hunter's envy, yet I made a number of extremely interesting observations on these bandits, who attack the natives' fields.

The natives surrounded the monkeys on all sides, and the animals at first attempted to slip out of the menacing circle; but when they realized that they were completely hemmed in, they fled to the centre and began to send out scouts to investigate the actual situation. The ape-scouts stole up to the line of beaters and hunters, listened, climbed the trees, surveyed the neighbourhood, and with a quiet chatter informed the one who was directing the whole defensive action. I think it was an old, enormous sphinx baboon with a dense mane of grizzling hair on his shoulders; and he, while making his way into the density of the tree-tops, unfortunately fell in with M. Camille Gizytski, and was brought to the ground by a ball from an automatic Winchester.

The beaters drove the whole batch of monkeys down to the bottom of a deep ravine overgrown with high trees.

Here a heavy firing began, which was dangerous enough for the encircled apes, but was just as dangerous for the ardent black hunters. Shots rang out in all directions at once, while over the head, past the ears and under the feet whistled bullets, large shot and the pieces of rusty iron with which the Negroes load their falconets. Why at least fifty beaters as well as one of us whites were not killed during this hunt I do not understand! As I have already mentioned, only one lad was hurt as he was pursuing a wounded ape.

As for myself, being quickly convinced that I might be stretched out at the side of the old baboon, I retired after the first shots, and speedily descried King Alpha Amadu Bailo sitting behind a rock, where no bullet could threaten him. I crouched down beside him, and we spent the time in pleasant chat, for the decorous and intelligent "king" spoke French fluently.

Soon only the bodies of dead monkeys and several wounded with arms bound behind them remained on the field of battle. The prisoners gazed sullenly with eyes flaming with despair and hatred at the crowd of natives surrounding them. Certain of them endeavoured with great leaps to break through the living fence, but fell beneath the blows of sticks or machetas. Others remained motionless, realizing the fruitlessness of any effort in face of so many enemies lying in wait for their life. One of the baboons—a female—stirred, her eyes fixed on the heap of stiffening bodies, and began slowly to make her way towards them. She halted by the dead and began to snuff and scream quietly. After a while with her head and arms she threw aside a body lying

there and found under it a little baby monkey. She bent over it, began to kiss and lick it, gave it her breast to suck, blew in its dead face, and having convinced herself that death had torn away the being dear to her motherly heart, she raised her head. Her eyes were full of tears, the face contorted despairingly. She menacingly bared her teeth and barked protractedly and furiously. Finally, leaving a bloody trail behind her, the wounded baboon began to jump up to the faces and chests of the men, howling and gnashing her teeth, until she was struck down by machetas and sabres.

With laughter and jest the Negroes began pitilessly to kill the wounded beasts. The black man has no sympathy for the pain of his fellow-man, and has still less for animals! He has not yet grown up to the feeling of sympathy which is developed in the first stages of civilization, and which disappears again as civilization reaches its zenith, leaving its traces only in a tradition full of the hypocrisy and specious sentiment which we see at every step in Europe.

Since the bloody scenes which I witnessed in the districts of Tuga I have never shot at a monkey, and never shall.

Taking leave of our friends, we continued our march, making in the direction of the next settlement, Dinguiray, where the residence of the French administrator was situated, and where we could obtain fresh porters. Our black supervisor and his wife were our guides. We passed village after village, where for the first time we saw youths who had recently been circumcised. They were wearing yellow robes and skin caps adorned with

feathers, and in the hand each held a lance to which a bunch of hair was attached. They were wandering through the whole village and the district, singing and gathering other lads around them, instituting societies with them, vowing one another mutual friendship and fidelity till death. At one of our night quarters girls appeared who had been subjected to the operation demonstrating their adolescence. They were wrapped in black cloaks and their hair was carefully coiffured. They halted in a row before the house we were occupying, and supporting themselves on tall staffs with which they tapped out the time, they sang us various ceremonial songs. My wife, who was transcribing the African music, was more glad of their singing than I was!

Crossing some low hills, after a couple of days we saw in a valley the buildings of Dinguiray, hidden among exuberant vegetation, green even at this season of the year, owing to a small torrent and a network of irrigation canals leading from it.

Administrator M. Brulé and his wife came out to meet us, and showed us to the house prepared for the reception of guests.

Dinguiray is the centre of yet another tribe, that is called Toucouleur or Torodo. These people are a cross of the Fulah invaders with the Negroes of various tribes, as well as with Moors and other peoples belonging to the white race. A large admixture of Aryan blood has resulted in a tribe extraordinarily capable and energetic, a little too crafty and insincere, but industrious and with great powers of endurance. The Toucouleurs are fanatical adherents of Islam and lovers of tribal independence,

and for this reason carried on bloody struggles with their neighbours in the not very distant past. In those struggles Dinguiray played an important rôle, for it was here that the strongest fortress of the tribe was situated. Close to the settlement and in the village I saw women with a refined cast of features, with crimped hair negligently covered with a white, gauzy kerchief. The Toucouleur women love to attire themselves in the amber, coral, and artificial and gold jewellery fashionable in the Asiatic East.

The Brulés gave us a female chimpanzee yearling, "Magda," for the Polish Zoological Gardens in Poznan. I sent it immediately to the Pasteur Institute in Kindia for them to forward to me when our vessel stopped at Konakry on the return journey.

At Dinguiray I was greatly interested by the news that the natives believe in the existence of a fantastic monster which grazes at certain seasons in the neighbouring jungle. They call it "so fali uara." This terrible animal has the forms of a horse, an ass and a leopard all in one.

Where could the legend of such a monster have originated? The horse was not known in this part of Africa before the arrival of the Sussus. Probably the ass was also driven here from Egypt and Abyssinia. Of this triad the only native is the leopard. It appears that the "so fali uara" became a monster not all at once, but with the passing of time, as the memory of the riders on horses and mules, covered with the skins of leopards, began to be blotted out of the natives' minds. These people carried death with them; and their cruel hearts,

powerful arms, and unexpected lightning attacks were immortalized by later generations in the monstrous forms of the legendary "so fali uara."

From Dinguiray we still had some days' march to the south, in the direction of the railway. Of the Futa-Jallon range only low eminences were left, but they also were soon left behind; we came out on a rich and fertile plain, intersected by the River Tinkisso and its tributaries.

I well remember one of our night quarters. It was in Tuman, a large settlement of the Dialonki Negroes. Here we found several natives who spoke French. When we entered the village, to the left of the road we noticed a large swamp, overgrown with green grass and small shrubs. Among the green glittered sheets of water. On the small lakes troops of ducks were feeding, on the banks were herons and waders.

"Who of you will conduct us to this swamp for a hunt?" I asked the natives. No one answered, and only when our supervisor repeated my question did one of the Negroes say: "We cannot be your guides. Those swamps are sacred. A bellowing crocodile lives in them."

There were no bounds to our astonishment. A bellowing crocodile? Crocodiles hiss very expressively and menacingly, but we had never heard of them bellowing. Our investigations into the mystery led us nowhere. The natives repeated that a bellowing crocodile had its headquarters in the swamp, and I could drag nothing further out of them.

"Yes! It is true!" our supervisor passed judgment finally, and seemed to drop his eyes a little too quickly.

M. Camille Gizytzki, a keen hunter, took his rifle and

went in the direction of the swamp. I noticed that almost the entire village crowded on to little eminences and watched the dare-devil. Unfortunately M. Camille came across such a morass that he could not penetrate to the edge of the lake, and had to return empty-handed. The mystery remained a mystery.

If this crocodile really bellowed, it could not have been a crocodile but a hippopotamus with a terrible voice, which might be very terrifying and far-reaching among the roars and howls of the other large beasts of the jungle. And if it were a hippopotamus the mystery was explained somewhat.

The neighbours of the Dialonki and Toucouleur Negroes are the Malinkis, the tribe with the symbol of the fish Ma, and so of the hippopotamus and crocodile. These are the totems of the Malinki Negroes, and these totems have evidently been adopted by the neighbouring tribes. This could easily have happened, since as a branch of the Sussu tribe the Dialonki Negroes already have the snake totem.

But spurred on by the enigma of the Tuman swamp and by the primeval customs of Africa's ancient inhabitants, my mind breaks through the banks of ethnographical hypotheses and slips into a stream of quite different conjectures. None the less they are not idle nor altogether without justification. By no means! In another place a couple of months later I heard a story which threw a ray of light on customs seemingly long since extinct.

. . . The dry season of the year was drawing to its close. The heat of the sun had burnt up everything on the earth. Nowhere around was a blade of fresh grass

or the tiniest coloured flower or a little green leaf to be discerned. The canes, bushes and trees with cracking bark stood burnt to their very pith. Like the trail of a snake which has crawled to the breast of earth stretched the fissures in the stone-baked soil. The birds had fled and the animals had wandered somewhere afar. Only the termites and the ants remained, but they also hid deeper in the gloomy vaults of their nests. The inhabitants of the villages, the small farmers, gazed with terrified eyes at the colourless, flaming sky, watching whether the little grey clouds, the harbingers of the approaching tornado, were not floating across it. Long these defenceless creatures had thirsted for the tornado. Surrounded with a swarm of evil lurking spirits, they were dying of hunger, for the granaries were already empty, and in the folds no one could dig up a single kernel of pea-nut or bean. The tornado should have arrived long since, but still it did not come.

Then the elders went into the jungle and returned late at night with a man of terrible appearance. He was wearing a dress of rind made from raffia bark, and on his head was a skin cap. Over his face he wore a terrifying mask painted with coloured bands and spots, with horns and a mane of horse-tails and vegetable fibres falling to the chest and shoulders.

Long the elders held counsel with the magician, and then they left him alone in a field which had been dug over a hundred times in a fruitless search for forgotten mandioc or beans.

The magician sat motionless and intent until the falling night engulfed him. The villagers thought he had taken

his flight to the jungle in the form of a mysterious night bird. But when the moon began to silver the crowns of the naked trees and to whiten the conical roofs of the huts, they heard him. From the field came a muffled growling, passing into a sullen howl, growing stronger until it changed into a menacing, powerful roar. All were in dismay, and no one dared to peep out of his hut, for they knew the magician was talking with the spirits of ancestors and with the jinns, and that the fate of the inhabitants of the village would shortly be decided.

Old and young, women and children—every living thing,—suddenly lapsed into silence; everything was hushed in expectation. No one spoke; some did not even dare to breathe aloud. A dead silence reigned in the village—a silence full of tension and alarm. One could hear the beating of the hearts, the nervous breathing, the hissing of the bats hunting after insects beneath the roof.

Only after midnight did the roaring cease. . . . A little later the magician walked swiftly from hut to hut, crying out: "The jinns have declared their will. Let the elders go for a council towards the river . . . beyond the Segal. . . . Gunde! . . . Gunde!" [3]

It was a good step of road to the stream. The elder people of the village walked for a long time, but they saw distinctly the track of the magician. Hardly an hour remained before dawn when they reached the river-bank. It was completely dried up, and its stony bed glimmered with white round stones like human skulls. Only in a few places, where the current had torn out deep holes, did water remain.

[3] Gunde = quickly.

By one of these spots the elders saw the magician standing. He was diligently scanning the bank and the stones emerging from the water. They surrounded the mysterious man from the jungle in a circle. The magician raised his terrible head with its features hidden behind the mask, and roared:

"The spirit of the storm has settled in a crocodile living in the depths of the stream, here in this place. . . . He must be appeased with a sacrifice . . . a sacrifice laved with the blood of a heart . . . the tears of a soul. . . ."

The elders stood in silence, remembering the former days, when they had made such sacrifices before every rainy season in order that the spirits of rain should bring the germs of fruitfulness to fields, herds and women. Now that the white people ruled over their land the custom was dying out.

"Do you understand?" the magician asked.

"We understand, O mighty man working in the shade!" they answered. "But whom are we to offer as sacrifice?"

"The first maiden who comes to the stream to wash the household calabashes," the terrible man roared; and he disappeared in the bushes on the bank-side.

The elders held a brief consultation and hid themselves in the bushes, their faces turned in the direction of the path to the village.

When the first rays of the sun fell on the peaks of the distant hills, a young girl (she was hardly thirteen summers), the daughter of the headman of the village, appeared on the bank. She went stepping cautiously on the round, loose stones, carrying seven great platters on

her head. She came to the pool of water, and setting the platters on the ground threw off her cloak and stood naked like a lissom liana—a liana on which two ripe, juicy fruits have suddenly grown.

After a moment she was suddenly surrounded by the crowd of elders. There was the splash of a body falling into the water, a terrible cry quivering with mortal terror, the patter of feet of the scattering people, the noise of stones rolling down, another splash, and a fresh, still more frightful, anguished cry. Then the silence of the quiescent, sleeping jungle descended again.

The elders returned to the village and announced that no one should venture to go to the stream that day, for the bloodthirsty morhomeneuara[4] was feeding there. And to confirm their words a menacing roar reached them from afar, from the direction of the Segal.

That very afternoon from beyond the forest dark-grey clouds floated up, thronging and gathering in one black mass. Soon fiery serpents began to drop from it and to roar—to roar so that even the bulls fell to their knees and buried their heads in the grass. The rain teemed down . . . it poured in torrents, bringing fertility to the exhausted fields; fresh grass suddenly sprang up out of the saturated glebe for the emaciated cattle, and the despairing people were revived with hope and joy.

The whole village rejoiced. When the rain stopped for a while everybody ran out of their huts, clapping their hands, singing, and dancing a clamorous merry tam-tam. Only one woman stood apart, sad and troubled. It was the wife of the headman. She stood listening and gaz-

[4] A man-eating panther possessed by an evil spirit.

ing in the direction of the Segal. After a moment the tears began to roll down her cheeks. But the rain suddenly poured down with fresh force, and the Negro proverb says: "No one sees the tears of even his best friend during a flood."

This correlation of two stories heard at different periods of my wanderings over African earth was suggested by the "bellowing crocodile" from the swamp near Tuman.

My sombre thoughts on blood sacrifices were still further stimulated by the circumstance that we ourselves became "a bloody sacrifice," offered up to the mosquitoes and biting flies swarming in the marshy environs of the settlement. There could be no thought of sleep. From the swamps ever fresh and more numerous legions of biting insects came flying right to our house. We were forced to take to flight, for even nets did not protect us. The little flies slipped in everywhere and bit—bit without mercy or respite. We dressed and went on to the verandah, where at times the bandits were put to rout by a fresh breeze.

It was now past midnight. All lights had been extinguished, and only the glowing coals threw ruddy gleams on the dark, squatting figure of a porter. In the distance slept the Negro village. At rare intervals we heard the protracted barking of a dog. The moon swam up majestically, reflected in the mirror of a distant lake, which in turn was set in a framework of black reeds. From them arose the muffled calls of water-fowl.

From afar, borne on the waves of the silver silence, came other sounds, sombre and menacing, and accom-

panied by a moaning ululation. It was the spotted ruler of the jungle, the leopard banqueting in an inaccessible forest fastness, while the timorous jackals sniffed at him and passed on the call to one another from thicket to thicket. Bats and night-birds soared with a rustle through the dusk. A vulture in the crown of a baobab suddenly awoke and began to pule mournfully. Something stirred among the grass-grown heaps of stone and fled with a loud howl. From the fields came the bass-toned chatter of monkeys.

Invisible beings momently troubled the silence. Rustles, whispers, gratings and scrapings sounded on the dry earth, in the undergrowth of the grass and bushes, from the thicket of orange-tree leaves, from the walls of the house and its straw roof, from the air and from under the ground.

These vague and disturbing, alarming sounds were being made by spiders, centipedes, scolopendrae, cockchafers, moths and lizards. But under the earth also labour was going on at a feverish pace, a life full of whispers and echoes was fermenting. It was the termites and ants excavating the earth and trees, tearing away sand, dragging small stones and carrying the remains of insects and the bodies of dead creatures to their subterranean lairs.

Swooning with the silence and inertia of a great lassitude and exhaustion, the African night engulfed in itself the trembling beams of moonlight and all the sounds of exuberant life, overflowing with the struggle and bloodshed of the greatest and the least of animals: from the

hippopotamus and the leopard to the tiny biting fly and the translucent red ant.

An hour after sunrise we were already on the road. At the sight of our caravan bands of monkeys fled from the fields of arachides, maize, millet and beans; partridges, bustards and guinea-fowl started up; twice we scared a beautiful crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina*), which eloquently testified to the proximity of a river. A turacoa fluttered out of the bushes right by the roadside; it is called "koko" (*Corythaeolus cristatus*) by the natives, owing to its very characteristic cry.

One evening in the distance we saw the railway-line and the buildings of Bissikrima station. On our arrival the black supervisor showed us the dwelling-house where we were to spend the night and to repack our baggage for transport by railway.

A great native settlement has grown up around the Bissikrima station, and although the neighbouring population belongs to the Fulah, Malinki and Bailo tribes, here one may meet with natives of such differing tribes as the Hubbu, Dialonki, Manding, Mikhefori, Tenda, Toma and Kissien, who readily make their way to this animated trading centre, with its numerous French, Syrian, Arabian and Negro shops.

Next morning we took train, and before sunset we were in Kurussa, one of the largest towns in Guinea. At the station we were met by the local administrator, Count Henri de Cousin de Lavallière, and his officials. The administrator informed me that the de Lavallière family had been related to King John Sobieski. We could not

gather from the Count's explanation how this relationship was established, but he was very insistent on it. He was an old colonial official whose character revealed all the traces of a long residence in Africa, where he had acquired habits which infallibly placed him outside any possibility of existence in the conditions of European life. Very gloomy was the impression made on me by this high-bred, widely-read, humorous, well-educated man, poisoned to the last drop of his blood, to his last nerve, with the burning poison of the tropics.

We paid a visit to the large trading and native settlement which stretches along the railway-line as far as the bridge over the Niger. Numerous shops, a spacious market, several roads leading to Kurussa from the districts of Siguire, Kissidugu, and Faranah, the mighty Niger and a railroad [5] make this town not only an important outpost of colonial policy, but an outstanding trading centre.[6]

The little houses of the Malinki Negroes, clean and spacious and betraying a high standard of comfort unknown to the natives of only a few years ago, witness to the prudence and thriftiness inculcated in the black people by the French.

We spent the evening with M. de Lavallière, where we made the acquaintance of his two wives, blood sisters, Fatuma Diami Kaba and Kondie Kaba, members of the royal family of Alpha Amadu, which belongs to the pure,

[5] The railroad runs from Konakry through Kurussa to Kankan. From this town motor-roads run to the Sudan, Liberia and the Ivory Coast.

[6] The native trade includes salt, cattle supplied from the northern colonies, and the colanut brought from the south.

noble race of Sankara. By them the administrator has had two sons—mulattoes who bear his aristocratic name and without doubt boast kinship with the defender of Vienna, King John III of Poland. But I know not what value his two black wives could be to the mind of the well-read Lavallière, even though they were great-granddaughters of King Alpha Amadu.

In the morning we went to the station to meet M. Poiret, and after a short conversation with him we went straight from the station to the port of Kurussa. Black sailors had already loaded our baggage on to two iron boats with little wooden houses and kitchens built on them. Here our camp-beds, tables and chairs were set up. The boats were at once transformed into snug little floating houses, in which we were to spend two weeks—for so long was our journey to last down the Niger to Bamako, the capital of the Sudan, whence had come these delightful and very comfortable "chalands," as they are called here.

My wife immediately set to work and quickly changed our "chaland" into a pleasant and tastefully arranged home. While we were making ourselves comfortable in our houses the Malinki sailors pushed off with long poles; and the mighty Niger immediately caught us away and carried us off into the distant unknown.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

UNDER THE POLISH FLAG ON THE NIGER

WHEN I now return in thought to the swift-flowing road, "the great, gracious Issa," [1] I see on it two boats floating under a fluttering Polish flag, which we had carried all the way to this spot, into the heart of Africa. I remember the years of my youth, when I dreamed of the expeditions and discoveries of Livingstone and Stanley, and when the thought oppressed me that by the merciless enactment of fate I should be compelled to sail this same Niger under some foreign flag. But time has brought its changes, and although I have grown grey, and although after Stanley and other great explorers the only sphere left for me to investigate is that of the souls of various coloured peoples, yet there on the Niger at the tall mast of my boat waved the flag of my free fatherland.

The Niger left on me the impression of a great tragedy. This mighty river constitutes the sole barrier to the waves of the sandy Saharan sea. If its turbid stream were to disappear the sands of the desert would stretch farther their morbid and murderous tentacles, and would begin to embrace area after area where now the industrious

[1] The Niger is called Issa in the Malinki tongue.

Malinki gathers the fruits of his fields—wrested from the jungle in the sweat of his brow, in the smoke of forest fires, in the heat of blazing days.

Boats coming from a distance are rarely to be met with on the Niger. Only occasionally did we see them, laden with cola, sacks of flour, millet and pea-nuts. But we came across many small fishing canoes.

We would watch the fishers drawing out their nets and flinging heaps of struggling fish on to the bank, where vultures, sparrows, and the daring fisher-eagle were waiting to snatch them up. On the opposite banks, in expectation of their turn, hovered cranes, African adjutants (*Leptoptilus crumenifer*), herons, spoon-bills (*Platalea alba*), and pelicans, while the great Senegalese stork or jabiru (*Mycteria senegalensis*), with a black band round its red beak, stalked apart in splendid isolation.

In the labyrinth among the islands swam troops of tree-ducks (*Dendrocygna vidutata*) and black and spur-winged geese (*Plectropterus gambensis*), with carmine heads and fearsome spurs on their wings. Along the edge of the water ran various waders, from the small snipe to large varieties, with white and black feathering, soft yellow excrescences hanging from the beak, and spurs at the crook of the wing.

We took pot-shots at these birds, which were far from shy and of such vitality that the small shot of our fowling-pieces hardly affected them. To add to our collection we shot at cormorants and grey herons sitting on the trees and bushes, and at the multicoloured bitterns and ibises standing statuesquely on the very edge of the water. Time after time we caught partridges and guinea-hens

which came running out of the jungle on to the bank of the river. We saw various animals drinking—jackals, hyenas, mongooses, wild cats and antelopes—but it was difficult to fire from a boat moving down a swift river, the more so as the inhabitants of the bush scented us from afar and disappeared into the bank-side brush.

More than once on the quaggy banks of islands or on stones breaking the course of the river we saw crocodiles, the "bama"; their name includes the sacred element "ma," the symbol of the fish, the fetish brought by the distant forefathers of the tribe from Asia, where the terrible goddess Ma, with the body of a fish, had her seat. The crocodile "bama," the manatee "ma," and the hippopotamus "mali" are still Malinki totems, and are protected by the law of tabu, which forbids the killing of these animals.

Here on the Niger we saw for the first time the monstrous heads of hippopotami noisily ejecting the water from their nostrils. The little eyes of these beasts gazed around swiftly and attentively, the short ears caught every rustle, the least plash of water. After a while, noticing our boat, they disappeared in the depths of the stream, pressing on farther and farther and swimming swiftly with the current. None the less their heads soon appeared behind us. Evidently they had dived under us and returned to deeper parts of the stream. At this season, when the Niger is continually revealing fresh shoals and rocks, such deeps are few and far between.

On their breasts the Malinki fishers wear talismans which protect them from the terrible mauls of the crocodiles, and they know conjurations composed of sacra-

mental words witnessing to the kinship of their distant forefathers with the monsters of their native river.

On those beautiful evenings over the Niger, when the flaming sun was beginning to drown in the golden and rosy mists of the west, and the turquoise and emerald sky slowly engulfed the scarlet rubies of a flaming planet sinking below the horizon, when right above the water—like a squadron of monoplanes—flew the silver-white herons, measuredly and calmly cutting the drowsy air with their powerful wings; when the loud plash of large fish could be heard as they played with the last rays of the sun on the glittering waves, and the lazy cries of birds wearied with the heat, one wished to believe that all men are brothers, and that in their hearts and souls they are aware of this brotherhood, that in the very murmur of the blood coursing in their veins they hear the words dreamed and desired by thousands of generations, "Let there be peace on earth!"

As absorbed in ecstasy we sailed down the Niger in the radiant, spectral, moonlit nights, it seemed as though we were transported to another world, drowned in the abyss of gently undulating azure streams of light flowing down from the sky. It was as though our world were gliding along a glittering band, a silvery road which flamed out and died away again, a road lined with the black walls of the mysterious jungle.

This road led to an unknown region lying somewhere high above the worlds, farther than the farthest stars which shone, hardly discernible, in the eastern skies of the fathomless and boundless dome of heaven. A music inexpressible in words sounded unceasingly, rising from the

quiet streams, from the slow, congealing cascades of mysterious light. But was it music, or was it only the restlessness of a wearied soul suddenly abandoned to inactivity? Perhaps it was the pulsing of the blood in the temples, or maybe the flagging, failing movement of a continually stimulated heart, grown weary of a lifetime of struggle and sensation and incomprehensible fears, of a life full of burning desires, anxieties, and ungovernable gladness, of ominous premonitions and the delight of fulfilled designs?

The music flowed from the water and the jungle, the air and the sky, the moon and the stars; its quiet melody effaced the signs of past and present sufferings, and lightly brushing with its gentle wings, it left a smooth white surface ready for the imprint of fresh anxieties and fresh endeavours.

Beautiful were those fabulous nights on the mighty, turbulent Niger, where the rocks and trees took on the form of monsters, whilst monsters were changed into immobile and unmenacing stones or the boughs of submerged trees.

The nocturnal jungle speaks in a never-ceasing whisper, but the nocturnal waterway is silent, absorbed with the mystery of earth's fructification by the mystic seed of the pale moon-god, and the fructification of the human soul with radiant, unattainable dreams, soothing with quiet gladness.

I received other impressions from the dark, abysmal, menacing and lurking nights, when only the stars looked down with an indifferent, everlasting gaze on the throbbing, suffering and agonizing earth.

In the dusk the river speeding toward the distant ocean becomes darker than the dusk. Only at times stars glimmer in the water and are engulfed without a trace, or the glow of a burning cigarette slips over the flat ridges of the nearest waves. Out of the dark night emerge the indistinct, softened outlines of trees and the undergrowth of reeds and bushes; unexpectedly, right under the prow of the boat, rise sharp reefs and sunken shoals of sand. The long bodies of reptiles drop from them with a hiss and a mighty splash into the water, and swarms of birds start up with a call and a whistle, casting about in the darkness and scaring the silence with cries of alarm.

On such nights I lit an acetylene lamp and threw a brilliant band of light on to the water and the fleeing banks. In the turbid depths I saw the black and silvery bodies of fish swimming towards the light. I could distinguish the slow movements of their fins and the round, astonished eyes.

At the very edge of the water the betwitched, blood-fiery orbs of a crocodile, rendered impotent by the light, shone from time to time out of the sand or the grass; or the green seductive eyes of smaller birds of prey, the flaming pupils of water rats and birds glittered in the darkness.

The rays of the lamp slipped farther and higher, penetrated the thicket of the trees and revealed more and still more creatures. On the branches hanging over the river perched sleepy ducks,[2] kingfishers and cormorants;

[2] On the Niger we saw ducks and geese perching in the trees even in daytime. This can only be explained by the birds being afraid (particularly at night) of the crocodiles and water snakes.

higher up, in the summits of the river-side trees were silver-white herons and cranes, seeking here a shelter from the rapacious mongoose and civet cat,[3] which slip noiselessly through the bush like snakes. Frequently a flock of partridges and guinea-fowl spending the night in the vicinity of the river would fly up from the trees.

The rays of the lamp pressed farther over the baobab's contorted branches, writhing like entangled and struggling pythons. Among the boughs I discovered the silhouettes of sleeping vultures and eagles.

When one night I directed the rays of my lamp in front of the boat, suddenly out of the gloom swam an apparition. It was a great sailing-boat floating against the current. Its sailors were asleep in a tent of straw mats, and only one man in a white burnous stood at the tiller, tacking among the islets and reefs. He stood white and motionless, and with the white sail was like an indistinct spectre emerging from the black jaws of the night. The boat passed by our "chaland," leaving behind it a light scent of smoke from the dead fire on the prow.

The lamp lit up the forms of our sailors. With powerful arms they drew the iron-shod poles from the water, threw them out before them and thrust them into the river bottom. They leant on them with all their bodies, pushed away with a heavy sigh of effort, and when the boat gathered way they bent and walked along the side, resting their arms on the ends of the bamboo poles, shuffling with their bare feet over the iron deck.

The banks of the river became flatter and flatter, and over them raged a jungle fire. The black smoke cur-

[3] *Herpestes galera* and *Vivera civetta.*

tained the horizon, and even the sun could not penetrate this veil with its rays. When, consuming the grass and the bushes, but invisible from the deck of the boat, the fire reached the trees, it threw up high, ruddy, flickering sheets of flame, ran with amazing swiftness right to the highest branches and there suddenly disappeared, as though it had leapt upward into the depths of the smoke-laden heaven. Approaching the undergrowth at the edge of the river, with a noise and a roar, a crackle and a howl, the flames swallowed up the grass and bushes in their fiery chaps, and in the twinkling of an eye dropped to the black, charred earth as though vanishing into it. At nights the bloody glare flickered and danced in the sky, quenching the stars; and flaming tinder and sparks rose above the sea of grass, carrying the flame farther and farther.

The frightened animals pressed down to the river, hordes of terrified birds hovered over the water. Only the white and black eagle soared below the clouds, chattering murderously, while the vultures hung still higher above it and puled mournfully for the funeral repast.

The forest fire accompanied us all the time. We forgot it only when our boat scraped its iron bottom over the sunken stones, spun helplessly in whirlpools, or drove hard on to shoals. It was simply impossible to believe that within some six or seven months the level of the water would rise during the rains by twenty-four feet, flooding the low banks for dozens of miles.

Sometimes we made to the bank to furnish ourselves and the sailors with provisions, and then we visited the native villages. Occasionally we came across people suf-

fering with goitre,[4] or with the terrible local disease "gundu." This latter is a growth of the bones of the forehead and nose to such dimensions that the face is completely deformed, and the eyes disappear beneath the growing excrescences. The French doctors are now investigating this disease, but the Negroes do their best to conceal it, for they regard relations afflicted with it as talismans protecting the entire district from misfortune, and especially from the fatal, magical influence of the "teri-diugu." This superstition had its origin in the outward appearance of the person afflicted, whose head resembles that of a hippopotamus, an animal totem which in its name "mali" includes the mystic syllable "ma." "Teri-diugu" is the name given to men with hair falling over their forehead and with a ringlet of scanty beard under their lower lip, or to women who have hair on their forehead. Owing to their evil magical influence the men "teri-diugu" involuntarily destroy the Negroes' crops and cattle, while the women are condemned by the spirits to the loss of all their nearest relations and to a solitary death without shelter or protection—their very presence entails misfortune for their family. The most effectual talisman against the "teri-diugu" is considered to be a man suffering with "gundu."

As is well known, a similar prepossession existed down till quite recently in Asia in regard to people suffering with leprosy. In the opinion of the Hindoos and the Malayans they brought good fortune. In southern China the clothes of a leper are laid on a new-born child. The

[4] The local doctors declare that this disease is caused by bacteria living in impure water.

hunters of north-west Siberia—the Orochons and Golds —even seek out lepers, since their touch assures success in the hunt.

Meantime the banks of the Niger fled past and behind us, continually dropping lower and passing into plains of sandy dunes. On the fifth day we arrived at Siguire, a large, populous settlement and the headquarters of the provincial administrator. On our arrival at the bank, where perhaps a hundred laden boats were rocking, I observed a familiar scene.

An old Arab, one of the drovers who drive cattle from the oases of the Sahara into the heart of the colonies, was sitting in the shadow of a tree and weighing out grains of gold in a little pair of scales. We learnt later that in the district of Siguire deposits of gold-bearing sand have been known since the twilight of history. White men have frequently tried their fortune here, but the sands of Siguire did not contain a sufficient quantity of the golden metal for the avaricious visitors. However, the Malinkis dig the gold out of their sands and sell it to the Arabs and Syrians.

We were struck by the large number of beautiful and graceful women, with frisures divided into four parts with the aid of four pigtails. Flaming, challenging eyes, passionate lips, lazy movements and a mysterious smile testified to the rather light habits of the Malinki women. A couple of hours later we learnt that the local women were truly distinguished by great frivolity and dissoluteness, and the official who informed me of this was amazed to hear that only in Siguire were the native Malinki women of easy virtue.

I was not in the least surprised at the fact. I have penetrated into various parts of gold-yielding Siberia, and I know that wherever the "gold satan" shows his features, morality, probity and nobility vanish before his poisonous breath. Here on the Niger, just as on another great river—the Lena—everybody unfortunately knew that virtue and human respect can be purchased for gold, and so no one felt any sense of obligation as he gazed covetously into the features of the golden devil.

In Siguire we made the acquaintance of the Levonovitches. A Pole by origin, he is now completely Russianized; she is a Russian. The fled abroad from the Soviets, and wandered about until they reached Paris. Here for some time they suffered real want, until M. Levonovitch succeeded in obtaining a post as a doctor in the colonies. Now he is there in his hospital at Siguire, healing the sufferers from goitre and ailments communicated to the natives by the whites. He himself suffers from malaria, but is happy in the knowledge that he will not be dragged off to-morrow to prison and shot.

In his eyes and tones I noticed that which always strikes me about the Russians in exile—the tragedy of conscious impotence, the yearning for their lost fatherland and tormenting anxiety for the fate of the dear ones left beyond the Red frontier.

In Siguire we made fresh purchases of provisions, and after some hours we were again sailing onward. After five days we arrived at the most dangerous part of the Niger. The entire channel of the river was barred for several miles with stones. The Niger flowed with a raging drive, forming whirlpools which spun our heavy

"chalands" in their eddies, despite the mighty efforts of the sailors. At this spot we met with several native canoes laden with goods, and saw how the current carried them away and dashed them on to the sharp stones.

This stony bed, bristling with reefs, stretched with insignificant breaks as far as Bamako, where the whole of the Niger was barred with a wall of rocks rising high above the water. The river had broken three narrow crevices in it, and forming waterfalls and raging whirlpools sped on to the east. Owing to these rocks, even at times of high water vessels only go as far as Bamako, and the sailors have no courage to sail farther. Several times the attempt to cross this natural barrier has ended fatally.

In the distance we beheld Bamako, the capital of the Sudan. The town itself was still hidden behind trees and bushes when we first observed the powerful masts of the wireless telegraph, and above them the massive outline of the Kuluba mountain, with the palace of the governor rising on its summit. Only half an hour later did Bamako emerge from behind the trees. First appeared the low buildings of the port, the tiny vessels waiting in expectation of high-water at anchorage or at the bank, where they are repaired and painted, then the warehouses of commercial firms, and a whole forest of little native and European houses.

We quickly arrived at the bank. The sailors began to unload our baggage while I hurried to the town to announce our arrival to the governor and to find shelter for us all. We were all weary of the two weeks' journey without opportunity for exercise, and my poor wife, bit-

ten mercilessly by mosquitoes, was betraying symptoms of malaria.

It appeared that Governor M. Terrason de Fougères, who gave me a very friendly welcome, had already made all arrangements; and so an hour after my visit to him we were settled in a snug little house on the summit of Kuluba, in close proximity to the handsome palace of our hospitable host.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE ARENA OF A GREAT EFFORT

GUINEA, the country of the Sussus and Fulahs, the land of the "sons of the soil," was left behind us. We had left in the west the carriers of the primitive cults, mingled with the invaders who brought Asiatic culture, with its echoes of the worship of Baal, Astarte and Ma and the vestiges of Egyptian civilization, which survive in drawings and carvings and in the symbols of the Serpent and the Bird.

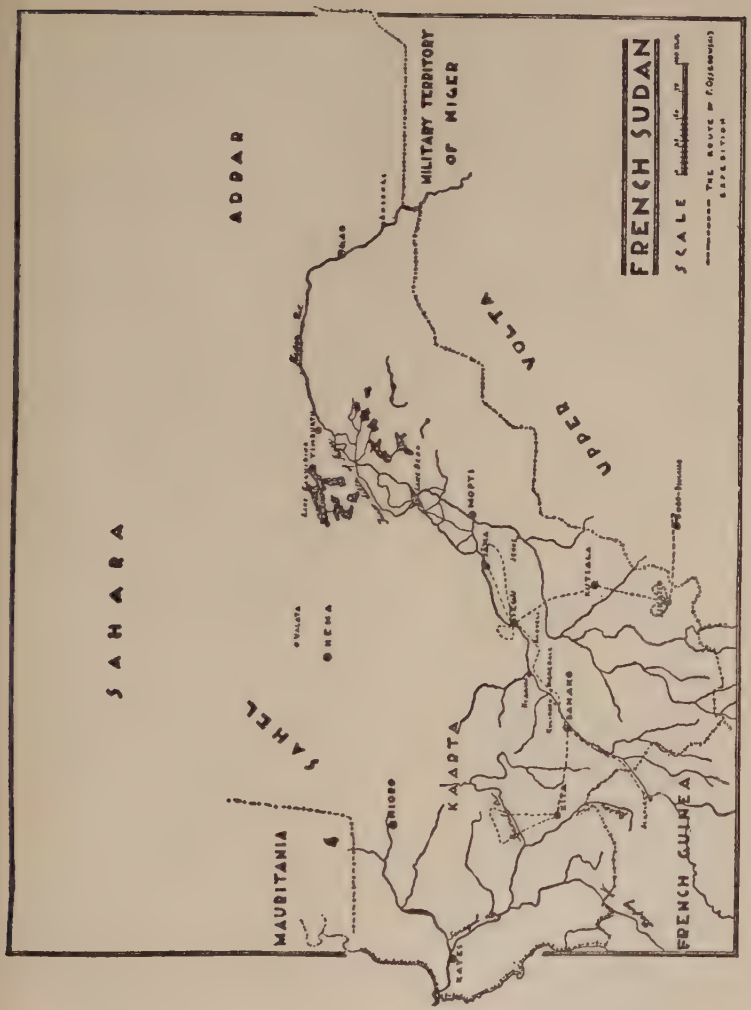
The understanding of the soul of these tribes, and still more of the conditions of their life and the need to adapt human energy to the exigencies of the climate, has evolved a definite trend in the French administration's native policy. As I have already said, a great struggle is being waged to free the Negroes from the bonds of merciless Nature; the auxiliary power of draught animals and the American plough are being applied, instruction is being given in the exploitation of the natural riches now lying neglected in this country, and the population is being drawn into contemporary civilization by an encouraging example. No compulsion whatever is brought to bear by the administration on the natives of Guinea, and the whole scheme depends on psychological influ-

ences. The immediate future will reveal whether a fitting road has been chosen for the attachment of this colony to common labour for the good of France, and in the future possibly for the good of all humanity.

In the Sudan a different guiding motive governs local policy. Governor Terrasson de Fougères also realizes that in order to enter the great human family the natives must pass through a school and learn new methods of agriculture and crafts, but simultaneously he remembers the contemptuous remark uttered by one of the British Ministers during the French conquest of the Sudan: "Let the Gallic cock grabble in the sands of the Sudan!" he sneered.

The French know that in the heart of the Sudan, hard pressed by the Sahara, they cannot even think of establishing agriculture or developing commerce without a stubborn, unceasing struggle. Consequently efforts directed exclusively to educating the natives would be vain and fruitless. In the conditions of the Sudan such efforts would be delusory and would involve the necessity for still greater physical exertion.

The governor-general of western Africa, M. Carde, doubtless hesitated long before he took the heroic decision involved in what is known as the "programme Carde." It is an enormous, almost gigantic plan for changing the sandy, barren expanses of central Sudan into a district suited to the most modern methods of agriculture, and for supplying France with cotton, thus rendering the trade of the mother country independent of the British and American markets. In M. Terrasson de Fougères, in the engineer M. E. Bélime, and the


SAHARA
ADDAR
MILITARY TERRITORY OF NIGER
UPPER VOLTA
SAHEL
MAURITANIA
KAARTA
FRENCH GUINEA
FRENCH SUDAN
SCALE

American Dr. Forbes, the governor-general has found energetic and devoted executors of this enormous programme.

These men know that in the tropical climate water is the pre-requisite of prosperity; they remember also the example of the British Indies, where between the years 1832 and 1848 great tracts of country were visited with drought, and where the starving native population was diminished by 37 per cent. However, an energetic British Government supplied water by building dams on the rivers Kistna and Dowlaishvarum, and in 1854 they finished the construction of a canal leading from the Ganges, thus routing for ever the spectre of crop failure and famine.

In French West Africa boundless but waterless expanses remain unpopulated. Historians declare that hordes of invaders from Mauritania forced the population to flight, and that it was they who destroyed and scattered to the four winds the former citizens of the huge and mighty empire of Gan or Ghan. Yet it is sufficient to visit only the district of Kita, the region of Nioro, or the expanses between Segu and Sama, for one to realize that another, still more powerful enemy compelled the former inhabitants of Gan to withdraw to the south beyond the Niger. I refer to the Sahara, steadily stretching its murderous tentacles farther and farther, like a visitation of God, like a malediction of evil spirits—of jinns, as the natives conceive them, irrespective of whether they be adherents of Islam or fetish-worshippers.

And as the result of periodically recurring drought years even the comparatively fertile Sudan provinces ex-

perience sometimes terrible catastrophes, such as occurred in 1903 and 1914, when the spectre of hungry death stalked from Bamako to Timbuktu. The regions lying to the north of the rivers Senegal and Niger and subjected to the murderous activity of the Sahara have long since been abandoned by their populations and lie fallow. The "programme Carde" embraces both these regions, and plans the construction of great networks of irrigation canals. This project is already on the way to execution.

In Senegal (Senegambia) great attention has been given to the sinking of wells and the introduction of the most simple mechanical methods of supplying water to the natives' fields. However, the selection of machinery constitutes an extremely important problem, for modern pumps are not durable, cannot always be adapted to local conditions, and—what is most important—demand fuel, which in those unforested and coal-less localities is not to be found. In addition, the administration is forced to reckon with the intellectual capacity of the natives. The Negro is by no means lacking in intelligence, he can easily assimilate sometimes very difficult and quite new ideas, but so far he has never revealed any gift for invention. The entire household life of the natives proves this, since they use such domestic and agricultural utensils and implements as, for example, mortars for crushing millet, the crudest and simplest of axes, a small mattock—a poor substitute for the most primitive of ploughs—and an enormous heavy knife, used as both sword and axe. Before the Arab invasion the Negroes had no knowledge of iron, and only the Mauritanian "haddad," or smiths,

taught them the art of substituting metal for stone; weaving was introduced to them by Carthaginian merchants; the art of hide-dressing by the Tuareg and Berber nomads.

During my travels I often observed this absence of inventive ability among the natives. If anything was ever broken the Negro felt helpless. As a consequence the French administration is forced very circumspectly to choose such simple mechanism as can easily be worked and mended by the Negro craftsmen.

The irrigation of the northern part of Senegal and even of southern Mauritania will draw the population back to their former pasture encampments and agricultural areas; at the same time the white colonists could cultivate the Egyptian kinds of cotton with success in these districts.

At present the more extensive and important works are being carried on in the Sudan. The whole economic policy of this colony is dependent on the irrigation of the enormous region from Bamako to Timbuktu, with the development of irrigation canals on both the left and the right bank of the Niger.

M. Terrasson de Fougères and M. Bélime showed us the first stage of this tremendous work. To the east of Bamako the Niger is barred by the mighty rocky cataracts of Sotuba. On them will be erected great dams, which will conduct the water of the Niger into two canals: one stretching to beyond Nyamina, the other situated on the right bank and leading in the direction of Segu, where it will supply water to the area lying between the Niger and the River Bani. The first of these canals will be ready within a year or two, and will not only

allow the natives and colonists to cultivate millet, mandioc, fonio and cotton on land at present barren, but will make it possible for vessels to avoid the always dangerous cataracts and to load rich cargoes of grain and cotton for export to Europe.

I visited the channel of the future Nyamina canal, and while doing justice to the mighty technique and human genius there revealed, I could not but give vent to heavy sighs whenever I perceived the imprinted, round and deep tracks of the hippopotamus on the parched earth which in flood-time becomes the bed of the Niger.

Within two years steam vessels will here churn the water into foam. Naturally the crossing of the Sotuba rocks will be prevented by the dams, and never again will a hippopotamus stand at gaze there. Even now they have no great liking for tumultuous Bamako, but still occasionally they come and plunder the vegetable gardens of the great modern wireless station. But now the end of their reign in their native Niger is arriving! After a decade African hunters will not fall in with them nearer than Ansongo or Gau.

Close to Bamako, in the village of N'Gagnale, hydro-electric machinery is to be installed, and the River Faya, which is now drying up, will be transformed into a reservoir. To the east of Segu, from the settlement of Sansanding, will run a second canal, fertilizing the now dead plain of Masina.

Finally there is the fourth and last region—that known as the inner Niger delta, lying to the west of Timbuktu. Here we have an entire network of lakes, from the largest, Lake Faguibine, to the smallest, the

Lakes Debo, Karara, Takadia, Tend, etc., linked together during the rainy seasons to form a huge lagoon 170 miles broad. The task of the technical experts consists in collecting this water into natural reservoirs and in making it available to the population and planters during the dry seasons.

That is the tremendous effort which the colonial administration has begun to exert, with the intention of wresting back from Nature the huge areas lying between Bamako and Timbuktu. They will then be sufficient for a population double the size of that at present living in the whole of the Sudan. This plan opens out horizons for rendering the entire textile industry of France independent of the foreign cotton markets.

One of the French private enterprises—the "Compagnie de culture cotonnière du Niger," directed by the Paris banker, M. Hirsch—possesses in Dire and Sama fifteen thousand acres of land which it has irrigated and where the planters are cultivating cotton, millet, maize and pea-nuts. The irrigation is carried on with the aid of powerful pumps, which supply water to the network of canals. How important an undertaking this is one may judge from the fact that in Sama alone 6½ miles of canals have been constructed. The entire area is protected from inundation by the waters of the Niger by means of a high fascine bank stretching for over 12 miles. Huge tractors and mechanical ploughs of various types are at work on the plantation fields; the harvests are good, and grow more abundant every year.

The American doctor, Forbes, is making a series of experiments to select the kinds of cotton most suited for

culture under local conditions. As the natives' cotton, long since brought here from Egypt, possibly by the Sussus or Peuhls, supplies too short a fibre, specialists are seeking similar kinds brought from British Nigeria, from Egypt and from the United States. Experimental stations are working on these problems, at the same time teaching the natives European methods of cultivating millet, pea-nuts and maize, and also cattle-raising. I visited two such stations: Niéné Balé, where on a plantation irrigated with the aid of a pump the director, M. F. Bouvier, is cultivating cotton of the American "Allen" kind, which yields good harvests in Nigeria, and also maize, millet, pea-nuts, mandioc, sweet potatoes (*Convolvulus batatas*), beans, "toria" (Indian "Colza"), vegetables and feeds for draught cattle, sheep and goats; and Barueli, where the dry field cultivation of cotton is practised, based not on irrigation, but exclusively on the selection of the plant. The director, M. G. Froment, showed us native cotton with fibre an inch long, and an American "Allen" variety with fibres of 1¼ to 1½ inches.

As cattle constitute the wealth of the population, and the attempts at crossing the local sheep with merinoes have had successful results, the administration is attentively watching over the care of animals. This is no easy task, for the Arabs and Tuaregs who come here from the Sahara bring with them various cattle diseases, such as strangles and anthrax. A special zootechnical station, directed by a pupil of the Pasteur Institute, Doctor Curaccau, who struggled with these diseases in Poland in 1920 and 1921, is working out the necessary remedies

and establishing quarantine zones. A veterinary school attached to the station is educating the native youth in this profession, so indispensable to the welfare of the country.

Such is the effort being put forth by the white man—an effort directed to overcoming inimical Nature and preparing the soil for the labourers of the native population and the white planters. When the plan is complete the administration will somehow or other convince the natives that they can without fear occupy the areas wrested from the Sahara and long since abandoned by them. At first that will not be easy, but after the first year, when the harvests are bountiful and certain, the natives will flock back to the regions that assure their welfare.

This enormous plan, designed to cover a number of years, was disclosed to me soon after our arrival at Kuluba; for M. Terrasson de Fougères conducted me to the upper terrace of his palace, and pointing out the silver serpentine ribbon of the Niger, spoke of the Sudan, of the governor-general, and of his own administration.

The Niger was already veiled by a light evening mist, into which Bamako was dissolving. Nevertheless, for a moment I still saw the town, so compact of astonishing contrasts. Close to the foot of the massive Kuluba rose the handsome edifices of the governmental offices, hospitals, schools and the post-office; farther off were the houses of the commercial firms and certain lofty and spacious buildings of strange architecture; beyond the town stood the high, lacy masts of the radio-telegraph, aeroplane hangars, and hundreds of tiny, grey, native houses, built of beaten earth and surrounded with little

papaw and mimosa trees. This congregation of native homes was intersected by regular squares of streets running together at right angles, which, in the event of epidemics breaking out, allowed of isolation quarter by quarter.

After a moment the night suddenly fell, and then throughout the town rows of electric lamps lit up, indicating the direction of the streets. The main street, running almost from the bank of the Niger to the foot of the Kuluba mountain, was lined with old trees. Through the thicket of their branches glittered little lamps hung on the telegraph poles. The stret climbed the steep side of the mountain, and widening in abrupt turns over a distance of two miles came out at its very summit, which majestically dominates the Niger valley.

The great palace, built in a heavy monumental style, symbolized the Government's struggle with Nature for the welfare and peace of the heterogeneous tribes of the Sudan, and suggested also a certain anxiety lest Islam should raise obstacles by its inroads with the harsh teaching of the Prophet, carried to the colonies not only by the nomad Arabs and Tuaregs, but by the very sand and the burning breath of the vindictive, merciless desert. The teaching of Mohammed has brought with it hatred for Christian Europe, and has flung the grain of enmity and bloody, arrogant dreams, like a poisonous seed, into the minds and hearts of millions of coloured peoples, simple-minded and docile in times of peace, who in the hour of struggle would be transformed into courageous and impetuous warriors.

Again and again have the French and British in Africa

come up against the green standard of the Prophet; again and again have they seen the ominous crescent floating above crowds of fanatical natives; and although they smothered these outbreaks of battle-lust and religious ecstasies, their reverberations tormented the hearts of the white conquerors with alarm for many years.

Disguised in the burnouses of common shepherds and guides to merchant caravans, the emissaries of Islam arrived from the heart of the desert, spreading confusion and trouble among the natives. They aroused in them distrust and hatred of the followers of Aissa, the prophet of Nazareth, who would not take the sceptre and sword of authority in His hands because "His Kingdom is not of this world."

The Nazarene brought His teaching of love and consolation to those who had lost all hope of happiness on this earth, where they perished of hunger, leprosy and plague, where they groaned under the yoke of the Pharisees and the gatherers of excessive taxes, where their shoulders streamed with blood under the strokes of the Roman mercenaries. The Nazarene spoke to them of a God-King, compassionate, just and loving; He summoned them to a heavenly kingdom after earthly torments were ended. He gave nothing to man for his earthly life, only opened a radiant road for souls after death. Thus the Nazarene's teaching weakened the influence of those who dreamed of throwing off the yoke of mighty Rome.

Six centuries after the Nazarene, Mohammed, the son of Abd-Allah and Amina, appeared, born in Mecca of the glorious Hassim Koreish tribe. He understood the natural law that living beings are concerned with this life,

with its necessity for struggle. Mohammed rejected Christ's palm-branch, the symbol of humanity and peace, and seized the sword in his hand.

"Ye shall be the rulers of the earth from the sea to the sea, and your enemies shall serve you; and if throughout your life ye repeat in faith 'La Illah Illa Allah u Mahommed rasul Allah, Allah Akbar' before you will open the heavenly region where "ye shall experience new delights, O mumens!" [1] taught the Prophet from Mecca.

He promised his followers happiness during their life, and still greater happiness after death. By this means he attracted to himself the people and tribes who pass a laborious and miserable existence in blazing, barren countries; by this faith in victory he created the powerful monarchies of the Osmanides, Edrisides, Almoravides and Almohades.

The Mussulmans hate the followers of Christ, who by their power delay the hour of vengeance and the final victory of the mumens in the struggle for happiness on this earth.

From the summit of Kuluba the inhabitants of the majestic palace, over which fluttered the tri-coloured flag of France, distinctly perceived the phantoms of the proud and bloody dreams dreamed by the eastern Prophet's warriors wandering beyond the Niger amid the haze of Saharan sands. And they fell into ever deeper and heavier thought and anxiety for the future fate of their nation's great work.

Perhaps it was these same thoughts which set the stamp of concentration and authority on the young, hand-

[1] Mumen = Faithful.

some face of M. Terrasson de Fougères, while in his eyes burned the fire of determination and readiness for struggle in a just work.

I noted anxiety and inflexibility in the eyes of the governor's closest assistants, MM. Descemet and Bélime, and I realized that they felt like generals before a battle which is to decide the fate of the whole war. And it would be a heavy war; for in the enemy's ranks were ranged the Sahara, the Prophet, and the childish, simple, adamantine distrust of the fanatical natives, who attribute every defeat to the evil spirits surrounding the white rulers.

If the colonies of western Africa were populated entirely by fetishists, the administration would unquestionably find willing and trusting assistants in the tribes descended from the creators and organizers of the powerful ancient and mediaeval States. But inimical Islam stands in the way by fostering a hostile attitude towards the whites not only among the native Mussulmans, but also among the fetishists. Dreaming of victory in Africa, it draws the followers of the Prophet to Mecca and Medina, where the marabouts and leaders of political and religious associations kindle in them the hope of a swift victory, of the expulsion of the whites, and the advent of the Mahdi, the Sword of Allah. From among the throngs of pilgrims the Mussulman agitators pick out the passionate and ambitious spirits and guide their thoughts and deeds in the direction desired by Islam.

During a horseback expedition in the Sudan from Kita to the jungle situated along the River Baoule, I spent much time among the fetishists of Bambara, the descend-

ants of the ancient rulers of the Kaarta Empire. The tiny villages belonging to the Negroes of this tribe are lost in the undergrowth of the bush, like little islands in a wilderness of ocean. It appears that the inhabitants of these villages never even visited the huts of their neighbours, but knew only their own huts and the surrounding jungle which provides their food.

From time to time a magician would make his appearance in the settlement, bringing news from a great world —news joyous or fearsome, or overflowing with mystic mystery. With these narratives he moulded the ideas of the primitive, continually terrified Bambar according to his plan.

In one of the villages I met a magician who had arrived from the jungle. With the aid of an interpreter I had a long conversation with him. The gaunt, mysterious man, with flaming, fanatical eyes and immobile face, slowly drawling his intricate words through his yellow teeth, at first endeavoured to convince me that he was not a material living being but a double, the shadow of a great magician who never left his shelter in the labyrinth of the jungle.

He expatiated on this theme a long time, closely watching to see whether I believed him or whether I let a smile flicker over my face. However, I inspired him with confidence, as I retained my gravity and composure to the end of our conversation. For I had had an excellent schooling in mysterious, enigmatic narratives when in days gone by I had sat by the fires of the Shammans, or in the huts and yurtas [2] of the Lamai and Buddhist won-

[2] The tents of Mongolian nomads.

der-workers hidden in the depths of mountain clefts. The magician of Bambara was unable to surprise me by anything he could have said. So I listened to him attentively and calmly.

Not once nor by one word did he recall the existence of the ancient glorious empires of Segu and Kaarta, where the rulers of Bambara held the regal sceptre with dignity in their hands, forgetting it only for the sword when they spread the fame of their terrible name along the whole of the Niger.

But the magician repeated the word "dya" more and more frequently, pointing with his finger to his shadow stretched over the yellow sand of the village courtyard. "The great magician," said my new friend, "has remained there in the jungle, in the quiet of his hut. I am his 'dya,' and I speed freely through the whole earth, from end to end."

Like a mysterious rustle or a distant whisper, spreading in the north under the vaulted roofs of ancient castles, where the shades of the former owners wander invisible, like the reflection and echo of events forgotten for ever, sounded this incomprehensible word "dya" to me. Simultaneously something from days long past began to vex and trouble me.

Word after word, thought after thought, I drank in and pondered over as I listened to the magician; and he suddenly became sincere and eloquent, emerging more and more from his shroud of mystery.

A hundred tomes of the most important works, legions of luminaries from all the universities could not have provided me with even a morsel of what I heard from the

magician, Namara Diadiri, or what I felt in his hoarse voice and in his black, burning eyes!

Diadiri, looking around cautiously, said:

"You see a tree, grass, a stone, the strange forms of the rocks, the swift stream of a torrent, a white cloud, a shining star, the pale moon and the sun breathing fire? . . . Do you know that these are living beings . . . similar to us men? Do you know that they have their own mind and their own will?

"Sometimes so much time may flow past that the infant born to-day perishes in the memory of the grandsons of its grandsons, yet this stone or this old 'ogni' [3] will seem to you deprived of will and movement. But remember that the time is coming when they will suddenly come to life; and woe then to man if their anger falls on him. Remember always and everywhere that everything which you see with your eyes has its own cares, its own sufferings and joys, and that it feels them as you feel them! The little stone feels them more weakly and the huge mountain more strongly; the flaming sun feels them more fierily or painfully, the sea more profoundly. . . .

"In man you find the power of resistance and the calm of a stone, the regeneration of a tree, the inviolable law of the course of the stars, in his blood and thought the flame and heat of the sun.

"The mountain summit, the stone lying in the bush, the mighty tree, the tiny blades of grass, the star falling or flaming forth in a night, the rising and setting sun, the hippopotamus in the depths of the river, the timid

[3] The baobab.

antelope, the bloodthirsty leopard . . . all that your eyes can see lives, understands, rejoices and suffers and desires; all these are your brothers, for all these have been borne by Earth; in all these are settled the spirits of ancestors, people long since dead, who wait for us, the living, to join their company. . . ."

"Why do you think so?" I asked as I listened to these revelations.

"Why?" he answered in a whisper. "See how your 'dya' lies on the earth! Do they not have their own 'dya,' the mountains, trees and beasts? Is not the sun-lit day the 'dya' of the sun, and night at full moon the 'dya' of the moon?"

"The 'dya'?" I whispered.

"Yes, the 'dya'! 'Dya,' like the light of the stars or the perfume of flowers, is what emanates from the bodies of men, animals, stones, trees. . . . At this moment, as I am talking to you, the magician is asleep beneath the thatch roof of his hut; but I, his 'dya,' liberated during his sleep, am here afar. . . ."

"You are the soul of the magician?" I asked.

"No! The soul is manacled to the living body, and bursts its bonds only when the body ceases to live. . . ."

"Yet you have a mind, so you must possess a soul," I reflected, thinking as I did so that I would not get any answer.

But Diadiri's eyes glittered, and his immobile face was suffused with pride.

"There are as many 'dyas' as we see things on the earth, as many as there are stars in heaven, as there are grains of sand in the desert, or drops of water in the

seas and rivers. . . . As you will distinguish me in a crowd of other people, so my 'dya' will recognize yours; for they are dissimilar, as our bodies and our thoughts seem to be distinct. Here on the earth we may not understand each other . . . for we speak in various tongues, we pray not to the same gods, different thoughts are born in our souls. But when the bodies of men and of things shed the 'dya' from themselves they will begin to understand one another, for their soul is the soul of 'nyama,' the great 'dya' of the whole world. This is the mind of every 'dya,' which brings from its solitary wanderings new and pure wisdom to man. The elders have that wisdom to the highest degree, and so they are sages. . . . Into 'nyama' are absorbed the souls freed after the death of men; from 'nyama' they step into other bodies. . . ."

"Is 'nyama' good or bad?" I asked.

The magician raised his eyes to my face and answered: "Nyama is just and inviolable, like the course of the stars. . . ."

I wanted to ask several more questions, but my colleagues returned from their hunt and the magician vanished in the crowd of tracks and porters. Never could I find him again. He had disappeared like a "dya" into "nyama." And yet those strange words about the shades of beings materializing were not far removed from existing Hindoo and European views on the substance of physical and psychical life—only they were more direct, almost palpable, in their naïve simplicity concealing the source of a mystic fear.

When some hours later I suddenly awoke my sleeping

"boy," and he began to fumble at his head, his breast, and his sides, I realized the intellectual process that was going on in his mind. The boy was asleep, but his liberated 'dya' had wandered off, perhaps too far off. I awakened the boy and made him jump to his feet. His body responded, but had his "dya" succeeded in returning to him? This the boy did not know; so he groped all over his body, feeling to see whether something was missing which would witness to the absence of the "dya." For to awaken a sleeping man to whom his "dya" has not returned puts him in danger of sickness, and even death.

My expedition towards the frontier region of Nioro, which once formed a part of the Kaarta Empire, provided me with a number of valuable observations. I made this journey in two stages: one of ten hours by rail from Bamako to Kita, the town where the former rulers of Bambara once dwelt, and where during the irruption of the white race the turmoil of war fermented; the second stage took three days of travelling on horseback from Kita to the jungle lying along the River Baoule.

I had to spend two days in Kita, and the town has left me with many memories. Here, thanks to the good offices of the local administrator's son, the young Georges Bouys, who speaks the Bambara tongue fluently, I was able for the first time to hear their folk-stories and their proverbs directly from the natives. Here also I made a closer study of the life and work of the Order of White Fathers and of the Sister Missionaries.

Passing through the picturesque settlement, with its extremely animated, colourful market crowded with Ne-

groes and Moors from Sahel, with its beautiful avenues and several freakish fig-trees—distorted, rotten, covered with knobs, excrescences and holes, and surrounded with legends and superstitions—I made my way to the institution of the Sister Missionaries belonging to the Order of "Notre Dame d'Afrique." Here I found industrious nuns, retired from the world, reconciled to their lot, and engaged in the technical education of converted and unconverted Negro maidens. They teach them the art of weaving, drawing and embroidery, and the little black children reveal a sincere attachment to their benefactresses. Among the nuns I met one who had not left the Sudan for twenty-six years—a withered face, the gentle, merry, even humorous eyes of a kind old woman, and lips that smiled calmly and indulgently. She had outlived all, and her life had become a tranquil, ever serene twilight, that grey hour when the last rays of the setting sun and the first streams of black nocturnal shadows struggle with one another.

This calm, gentle and cheerful nun sometimes saddles a horse and makes a long, solitary expedition into the jungle, to the Negro settlements hidden there, where she confirms the newly converted Christians in the faith, succours them in their sicknesses and their misery, and gathering together all the inhabitants of the village, she speaks in the pure, flowery Bambarran language of the great work of the white people, of their dreams—vague even to themselves—of the everlasting peace and happiness of all the people on the earth, of the sublime, divine words of Christ, the great Prophet of love.

This sister knows that she cannot be certain of either

the day or the hour when the new Christians will suddenly begin to pray to the fetishes and carve the sacrificial chicken in their honour. But that does not terrify her, for she believes that Christ's words of love will not die away in empty sound, but will fall deep into the hearts and minds of these people; she knows that perhaps the divine seed will disappear beneath the strata of primeval superstitions and cults, but that with the course of time it will spring up in the souls of their grandchildren, and, no longer an alien crop, will cover the modest field now being so diligently fertilized.

In the monastery of the White Fathers I saw the superior and three brothers. All come from good, old French families, and work hard in an alien, hostile land. They do not convert the Negroes, but assist them in their struggle with Nature, teach them by their example, and lead them on towards the still-distant goal.

What has brought these people here? What storms of life, what tragic circumstances and bitter experiences have compelled them to hide their suffering beneath the white habit, to appease their passionately beating heart with the heavy black cross, to mortify the body in the fire of the tropical sun, in the lurking silence of the jungle?

Those small and narrow monastery cells might tell what they have seen and heard within their walls, when night has fallen and the silence glances into every corner with abysmal eyes of great yearning. I had a distinct feeling that sights like great glooms sometimes murmured under the dark ceilings; bitter tears of unextinguishable and now reverent memories fell and soaked into the beaten earth of the floor; burning, despairing

whispers buried themselves like the points of poisoned arrows in the walls of the White Fathers' cells.

I know that they are industrious, devoted to their mission, ready for anything; but I know also that only the genuine anguish of a tormented soul or wounded heart could drive these white monks into the blaze, the solitude and the difficult existence of the Sudan, where everything is alien and hostile, and where, like a vessel lost on the ocean, their labour never sees the beam of the lighthouse beckoning in the distance.

My horse expedition embraced the areas situated to the north of Kita. The road led through the bush towards the bank of the River Baoule, turning off near the village of Sandanbugo. From there a single track ran on to the Baoule. On the opposite bank of the river stretched the wild jungle, where probably Europeans had never been before. The jungle extended to the large outpost of Niovo. But the whole of the road passed through jungle, in which we saw herds of antelopes, warthogs and partridges.

Our tracker, Faramusa Keita, halted our caravan at a little village nestling against high, picturesque cliffs cut by a deep ravine—dark and breathing a hot humidity. Over the ravine lay a fallen tree which formed a bridge. The undergrowth and the sides of the cliff were swarming with monkeys, which occasionally attacked the native fields; in the crannies among the stones hundreds of wild pigeons were nesting; and higher up, in small, inaccessible caves, eagles had their lairs.

In this village a new tracker named Buru-So attached himself to us. Small, quite square-built, with a

face rather Mongolian than Negro, he revealed uncommon strength and endurance. Buru-So had no arms whatever except a hunting knife in a beautiful sheath ornamented with coloured straps. I was astonished by the tracker's attire. It had been yellow once, but with the course of time it had become covered with vari-coloured patches, red, black, blue, and green, and overlaid with soot and pitch from the smoke of camp-fires. On his head he was wearing a cap with ear-flaps, very like the Chinese popular headgear, and, like the coat, covered with patches and stains.

Only later, in the jungle, did I realize why Buru-So had attired himself thus. It was a hunter's dress, which was absolutely indistinguishable when set against the greyish-yellow ground of the bush, with its black trunks of burnt trees standing out here and there, with its little green carité bushes, the flaming flowers of the "capoc," and the red fragments of laterite rocks.

Led by our hunters, we passed by Negro villages, fields of cotton, millet and pea-nuts, and the dry beds of streams dropping into the Baoule. Everywhere the population was peaceable, hospitable and docile.

In our night quarters, while we sat at a supper arranged by a perfect Negro cook who accompanied M. Bouys, the inhabitants of the villages thronged around us, and nibbling at the pieces of sugar we had given them told us their folk-stories. I wrote down several, but one in particular attracted me by its dramatic character and psychological insight.

"Said old Farana-Duso to his daughter," the old head-

man of the village began his story: " 'You are grown up; you must find yourself a wealthy husband so that you can be the stay of all our family, for need is oppressing us. He should be strong, in order to defend us from animals, from the evil man, and from hunger in the hut.'

" 'Young Furabulo is such a man!' whispered the maiden, and shielded her face with her hands. 'Single-handed he pursues the panther in the mountains; in combat he overcomes all the youth of the entire district.'

" 'Furabulo is not well off,' answered her father. 'His hut is old and small.'

" 'He lives alone, so he does not need any other,' said Farana-Duso's daughter. 'Nevertheless, in his hut there are always millet, oil, salt and pea-nuts.'

" 'No!' cried the old man. 'I shall give you in marriage to the merchant Sanu-Uari. He is rich and powerful.'

" 'Father!' the maiden began to entreat him, 'Sanu-Uari is old, and I am young and all say that I am beautiful. . . .'

" 'Youth and beauty pass away,' muttered the father. 'There remain custom and wealth. You shall go to Sanu-Uari!'

" 'Father!' pleaded Tasuma, the daughter of Farana-Duso. 'The storm also passes, but it leaves behind it trees torn out by their roots and the thatches of huts thrown down to the ground. The night passes, but the dew remains and gives the millet and mandioc to drink. . . . The day passes, but its heat is life, not vanishing in the night. . . .'

" 'Nonsense!' exclaimed Farana-Duso. 'Nonsense!

You will be united with Sanu and you will forget everything.'

"'The sun never unites with the night, Mfa!' (father) the maiden cried. 'And I shall never unite myself with Sanu-Uari; rather will I die.'

"'You must follow your father's will!' her father declared in a menacing tone.

"Seeing all was lost, Tasuma ran out of the hut, and coming to the bank of the river threw herself into its depths. At the screams of the women gathered there the whole village came running. Farana-Duso and Sanu-Uari also ran to the spot. All stood and watched as the maiden swam with the current, growing weaker and weaker, yet no one had the courage to jump into the river to the rescue of the drowning girl. Sanu-Uari promised two oxen and two sheep as reward to the brave man who should rescue Tasuma, but no one stirred from his place, for all knew that in the water lurked an old, rapacious crocodile, a man-eater.

"Suddenly the young Furabulo came running, and seeing the drowning maiden, leapt into the river. At the same moment the crocodile thrust its fanged snout out of the water. None the less Furabulo swam to the maiden and made his way with her towards the opposite bank. Seeing that he would soon reach it and that the crocodile would not get them, Sanu threw himself into the river in order to catch the young people and to take the maiden from his rival. But at that moment the crocodile threw itself on him and sank with the merchant to the bottom of the river.

"From that time the crocodile became the fetish of

the people, and twice a year the young folk make offerings of a young chicken to him, asking that they may be given wives and husbands with love."

Sometimes we listened till late at night to the Negroes' stories; and to them Delimani, a charming little "griot" who had fallen in love with young Bouys and accompanied him everywhere, added his legends and fables. Usually these were stories of talking animals endowed with all the features of human beings, and understanding thoroughly what justice and love mean to the weak and unfortunate.

While making our way towards the Baoule, we discovered some very picturesque rocks in the dense jungle. For long the wind and rains had been eroding them, and they were beginning to disintegrate and crumble down. Above the flat summits rose a few rocks in the form of columns with freakish heads or with the shapes of men and monsters, but they also were threatened with ruin, consumed by the winds and the rains.

These cliffs enclosed a spacious amphitheatre, with a floor covered with fine gravel and crumbled stones. Out of the barren ground a few prickly shrubs with coarse, grey, fleshy stalks were growing. When I cut one branch with my knife a white viscid juice began to flow from it.

"Beware!" Coro-So said to me. "That is poisoned 'water,' the weapon of the evil 'kudu,' the ruler of these mountains."

We were in the heart of the Dugu-Tigili cliffs, where, as the legend says, before the ages gathered all the spirits of the jungle, in order to give sway over the jungle to

the most powerful among them. Here on the hard earth of the amphitheatre a duel of spirits took place, but no one was left victor. Then one of the spirits, named Dugo Tigili, stamped his foot in his anger, and there swiftly grew up fleshy bushes overflowing with poison. The terrified spirits immediately recognized Dugu's superiority, and elected him as their "kudu," or ruler.

So from this moment we were within the confines of Kudu Dugu Tigili's dominions. I do not know whether the bushes we found there were really poisonous, but I must confirm the fact that we found no animal tracks, no lizards glittered, and no birds or insects flew about the cliffs.

From Dugu Tigili we reached the bank of the Baoule. The river had a strange appearance. The channel was framed with steep banks and was littered with huge boulders. Only in a few places did we find water, for during the dry season the whole river dries up, leaving only a series of deep pools in which water is preserved. Here and there in these pools were living hippopotami and crocodiles which had not succeeded in retreating to the Senegal during the periods of high-water; here antelopes and the rapacious beasts inhabiting the surrounding jungle came to drink. Everywhere along the banks stretched animals' tracks, running down to the places in the channel where among the deposited rubble and rock boulders the water hid from the sun, concealed in the shadow of overhanging boughs of ficus and mangrove trees.

Every day we made our way with our trackers into the jungle. Here the "book of the jungle" lay open before

our eyes. The pages were written with amazing hieroglyphics, and turned over of themselves, revealing ever fresh wonders to our astonished and enraptured gaze.

On a rise strewn with little pebbles Boru-So found a short, ruddy hair, and a little farther on a deep scar on a root emerging from the ground. He smiled enigmatically and began to tell that yesterday a herd of small antelopes had spent the night there, and as they had found a little grass among the stones they had decided to remain all the following day. They were feeding there at noon that very day, when they suddenly took to flight, leaping in panic across the stones and the bushes, leaving these long slits—the marks of their slipping hoofs —on the ground. What had frightened them? Some rapacious animal had crept up to them, and catching its claws on the roots of the tree had made an unnecessary noise, startling its prey. It was a civet, a terrible enemy of the antelope. We did not find the mark of her paws on the stony ground, but farther into the jungle, on the soft loam, we perceived them. She pursued the agile antelopes for a long time, in one place pressing them right to the river; but they extricated themselves from it, and in a mad gallop, tearing their hair on the sharp thorns, they had fled on, leaving their assailant behind them.

We saw the marks of all the four paws of the civet, when it stopped, snuffed, and listened. Realizing that, once startled, antelopes would not allow themselves to be approached for some time, she went hunting after other animals. She fell upon some wild guinea-fowl resting in the shade of a bush and carried one off. A little heap of feathers and a few drops of darkening blood

eloquently witnessed to the tragedy of the bird and the triumph of the animal.

Not far from the river we observed two parallel trenches deeply cut in the earth. They stretched for some distance, until they disappeared on harder ground. These trenches had been pressed out by the powerful feet of hippopotami making into the jungle after food. Startled by no one, they went far into the jungle, leaving the bank several miles behind them. I saw the place where they pastured. The monsters had pillaged the jungle for a great area, devouring grass and young bushes and with their curved tusks tearing the roots of trees out of the earth; and they had left the traces of where they had tousled and rubbed their tough hides, stung painfully by horse-flies and insects, on the rough bark of the capoc trunks.

Here we could have hunted after these water monsters, concealing ourselves on the bank or laying an ambush in the jungle, but we did not do so, for the hippopotamus is the totem of the Bambara Negroes, and in particular it appears to be related to the cunning Faramusa-Keita. This Negro rogue led us up the garden with his "Mali"![4]

When I bitterly reproached him, he answered me with philosophic calm by a proverb in the Bambaran tongue:

"Be i da—yoro ntumu don uo!"[5]

In the sandy spots of the jungle, partridges, bustards, rock hens and other wild-fowl left numerous traces be-

[4] Mali = hippopotamus.

[5] "Every man knows his own needs best." Literally translated it reads: "Each best knows the worms of his own couch."

hind them; little depressions dug in the earth, lost feathers, and scattered husks of wild grain.

Great antelope buffaloes (*Bubalus major*) stole like enormous spectres through the bush, roaming with their freakishly contorted horns and heavy, awkward bodies among the waving tops of the grasses and bushes. They left behind them deep round tracks like the impressions of mules' hoofs. The smaller antelopes, the striped "sing-sing" and "son," wrote their name as though in a visitors' book, with such ease were they deciphered by the Negro tracker. He told me how they had gone, what they had done, where they had gone to, and what they intended to do.

The year before giraffes had wandered here from the more northern districts when the earth was still damp after the rains, and had left behind them a serpentine line of tracks, now beginning to be effaced. In another place wild buffaloes had passed, marking their track with their hoofs and indicating their size by the height to which the branches had their young shoots recently nibbled off. The wild cats, thrusting their sharp, hooked talons into the earth, had written in the book of the jungle the day and hour of their visit, their size, and their return to undiscovered lairs.

One day Faramusa-Keita found the tracks of a leopard—quite fresh tracks leading in the direction of several disintegrating, crumbling rocks. He made a slight grimace, for our tracker did not like rocks and immobile things, since everyone knows that they are the abode of "sacred" animals and evil spirits, possibly of "kudu" himself.

But he had to guide us. Among the rocks we found the leopard's lair, the remains of antelope meat, the marks of the powerful talons in the ground, in the sand and on the trees, and the path trodden out by the animal through an impenetrable thicket of prickly mimoza bushes intertwined with a network of lianas. We did not find the lord of these rocks, the spotted leopard, at home; without doubt he had scented us from afar and had disappeared into the jungle by another road.

We quickly became convinced that the spotted cat was inhabiting an ancient human centre, for by his lair we found a spacious cave, with the traces of a former fire in it. The walls of the grotto were covered with numerous drawings representing the heads of buffaloes, arrows, rings and squares. This cave was not previously known to the French, so I gave it the name of the "Grotto Polonia." It is to be found in a straight line from the village of Sandianbugu, on the opposite bank of the Baoule, about a mile from the rocks separating two basins in the bed of that river.

I have closely studied Professor Houdas' work on the ancient drawings and inscriptions discovered in the Sudan, in the district of Bezenga, Karona, Songo, etc. I have also seen photographs of these drawings and inscriptions. So I may be allowed to state that the writings and drawings of the "Grotto Polonia" are neither Lybian-Berber hieroglyphics nor the signs of the Tamashek alphabet, nor the later Arab script as it is deciphered from the stone in the cemetery at Kuntah. The drawings made on the rocks with the aid of oxide of iron and discovered during my expedition are almost

entirely of a dissimilar character. While certain rings and intersected squares recall Lybian-Berber writings, and the crosses recall the Tamashek orthography used by the Tauregs of the Sahara, the very existence of both these alphabets in one place, in a form testifying to the continuity of the drawing or inscription, would seem to pronounce against the idea that the Tauregs and Berbers have traced these inscriptions at different periods of time.

"It was the former people who left behind them these signs—the people who lived in caves," explained the Negroes to us in a whisper.

In the mountains of northern Sudan many caves and hiding-places have been discovered which were once inhabited by cave-dwellers,[6] so probably the "Grotto Polonia" was once the shelter of primitive people, possibly those very people who first formed the conception of totems, of spirits and their immortality, and of other phenomena which remain enigmas to this very day.

One circumstance held my attention. In the inscriptions of our grotto drawings of buffalo heads and also arrows were frequently repeated, being placed in various positions, some of which would render it inconvenient for a man standing on the ground to draw them. Unquestionably every such drawing corresponded with a distinct idea or alphabetical sign. When some months later in the Paris libraries and museums I sought similar signs in relevant literature, I found them in photographs of ancient western Asiatic writings: in the "stele mesa"

[6] In the mountains of Tireli, Bandiagara, Bubani-Kani, Ibi-Engem, etc. (*vide* Dr. E. Ruelle, *Anthropologie*, vol. xv; L. Desplagnes, *Le plateau central Nigerien*. Paris, 1907).

preserved in the Louvre and originating from Syria, and so from a country where the goddess Atargatis (Derkato) possessed the tail of a fish. I also found them in the comparatively recently discovered bricks of Tel-Amarna with their Hittite[7] inscriptions, in which is honoured the goddess Ma, from whom this "sacred" syllable passed to the totems of the Bambara, Malinki, and other former lords of this jungle and these mountains.

I am no archaeologist, but I remember some of the stories told of these scientists. I remember that a certain rather naïve archaeologist who was studying some cave drawings found among them a steamboat, and promptly concluded that he had discovered traces of a highly developed civilization belonging to some unknown prehistoric people. The scientist had been made the butt of a cruel joke, and the name of the poor fellow has gone down to history.

I remember that story, but as I am no archaeologist there is rather more excuse for any erroneous deductions I may make. Yet I think my wisest plan is to advise archaeologists to investigate the "Grotto Polonia" for themselves. Who knows? Perhaps they will find in it traces of those people who brought the symbols of the serpent, the fish and the bird to Africa. The grotto lies on a natural route of invaders making for the heart of the country from the north-west with a view to avoiding the Sahara.

While wandering in the neighbourhood of our grotto, with the help of the tracker I absorbed further pages of

[7] The Biblical Hittites and Egyptian Ketas.

the "book of the jungle." On the slopes of the rocks we one day found a white and brown ringed needle, about twelve inches long, shed by a porcupine. It lay on a line of tracks of deep depression surrounded by little holes made by the claws of the strong paws. The tracks led me to a deep burrow; it was a large, funnel-shaped hole with a tunnel running under the ground. The burrow had three exits, and the greatest distance between them reached over 120 yards.

In another spot the Negro showed me a freshly dug fosse, two yards deep and ending with a broad tunnel leading into the ground.

"A porcupine?" I asked the tracker. pointing to the burrow.

"No!" he answered. "That is the home of a 'yendu.'"

This is the name the natives give to the earth-pig (*Orycteropus senegalensis*). It is a secretive animal, and so strong that it destroys the strongest of termite mounds, and, as hunters declare, can burrow into the ground in a moment before the eyes of the onlooker. During our hunts we fell into more than one of these deep, treacherous warrens hidden in dense grass, and our horses came very near to breaking their legs.

The tracker found yet another warren in the grass. It belonged to the pangolin (*Manis longicaudata*), which like the porcupine and the earth-pig is also a determined enemy of ants and termites. The pangolin is regarded as a magical animal, since water into which the animal's scales are dropped safeguards a man from all dangers. Of course, this is what is known as "magic by analogy." As the animal is perfectly protected by its armour from

the attacks of rapacious animals, snakes, insects, and even from the arrow of the native, a liquor from the scales of its armour confers these same properties on the man who drinks such a magical potion. European hunters told me that this prepossession makes it impossible to preserve the skin taken from a pangolin, as the Negro tears off the magical scales for talismans in the twinkling of an eye.

During our nocturnal hunts with acetylene lamps, when I sought beasts of prey and dreamed of meeting a leopard or a lion, I experienced moments never to be forgotten. . . .

. . . I enter the sea of dark jungle. I do not hear my own steps, for on my feet I have soft shoes over the coarse, plaited string sole. I slip forward quietly, endeavouring to avoid the branches of trees and overhanging lianas. For a hundred yards ahead shoots the beam of rays from the lamp, and in its white light trees, stones and walls of canes emerge before me, almost white and misty, like spectres.

When I bend my head to look on the ground emeralds scattered everywhere begin to flame. Little green sparks are lighted and extinguished, twinkling in the grass and among the stones. I stoop down and see that these are the flaming, mysterious, immobile eyes of huge spiders, lying in wait for their prey. Above the grass pale-red sparks frequently twinkle. They are the shining eyes of fleeing antelopes. I do not fire at them, so I see how as they flee they stand and gaze at the unknown phenomenon of light making its way through the bush. Suddenly in a glade burnt out of the forest single little red points

glitter. It is a hare cocking one eye in my direction, or a bird perching sideways to me which has awakened and raised its sleepy eyelid.

I press on! . . . and on!

Somewhere at a turn in the animal track some creature's pupils glimmer with a green phosphorescent fire. I do not allow them to pass beyond the illuminated field of the beam, and make for those eyes, while not knowing to what they belong. I see only two eyeballs, menacing, flaming and astonished.

I think I can fire now. There is a report. I run and see that a rapacious genette with a long striped tail is with its last strength endeavouring to disappear into the bush. Sometimes instead of a genette or civet, the terror of fowls and guinea-fowls, after the shot one may see a leopard writhing in agony on the track.

While wandering in the Sudanese jungle I obtained several curious specimens of a little animal resembling a squirrel, with enormous eyes which flamed like lanterns in the light of our hunter's lamp. The French call this animal a "pantona," but it appears to belong to the lemur family;[8] it is quite common throughout the Sudanese jungle, but it can be seen only at night. Occasionally I also heard the cry of the pantona when a bloodthirsty genette had cunningly caught it.

We found the true jungle in the bush along the Baoule, and here we began to understand and decipher the large and small hieroglyphics drawn by the hand of Nature on the earth, on the rocks, on the boughs of trees and

[8] The *Otolicnus senegalensis* and the *Galago Demidoffi*, belonging to the lemur family, are mentioned by the French zoologists, Maclaud, Geoffrey St. Hilaire and Fischer.

even on the crumpled grass and the broken branches of bushes.

After a heavy day's hunting we would return to the camp after sunset; and when supper was over we would listen until midnight to the hunting yarns of the natives and their still more curious folk-stories.

After listening to Faramusa-Keita's shameless bragging, one of our Negroes expressively gave vent to his opinion of the hunter's incredible monstrosities by quoting the native proverb:

"You may ride a horse well, but don't try to sit on your horse's nose."

After which he waved his hand contemptuously and went to sleep by the fire.

Little Delimani, a pert and waggish "griot," was always very popular for his droll stories. Attired in an old suit of pyjamas of M. Buoys, and laughing still more loudly than his audience, Delimani would tell in his childishly piping voice:

"Courageous was young Didian, and he did not wish to sit with his parents in his hut. He dreamed of hunting the lion, but his father did not want to give him permission to do so. However, when the youngster was insistent and implored him, he told him he would let him go if he could find a hunter who proved himself to be the swiftest of all men. Didian informed the neighbours of his parents' decision, the neighbours their acquaintances, the acquaintances their neighbours, the inhabitants of the nearest and farthest villages, and these again informed everybody from sea to sea. Soon three hunters arrived at the village in which Didian's family dwelt.

They all began to say together that they were the swiftest men in the world.

" 'Nsonsan bole' fali fe, nka den te!' [9] Didian's father answered with a proverb, contemptuously shrugging his shoulders as he listened to the bragging of the newcomers.

" 'We will show what we can do!' cried the hunters. And so it was decided.

"The first man took a vessel and went to fetch water. When he drew out the full calabash his stick slipped from his hand and was carried off by the river current. Yet the hunter succeeded in carrying the water to the village, returning and drawing out the stick from the water in the very same place where he had stood before; for he ran so quickly that the stick had floated hardly the length of a hand away.

"Seeing this, the second hunter made his way with Didian's father to the jungle and there tracked down an antelope.

" 'Now look!' he cried, and let fly an arrow at the animal.

"The arrow sped with a whistle, but the archer overtook it, caught the fleeing antelope, and then ran back and caught the arrow in its flight.

"It was now the turn of the third competitor. This one waited until the rains began, and then he ran from one village to another with such swiftness that he did the whole journey between two drops of falling rain."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the natives listening to Deli-

[9] "A hare is like an ass in the length of its ears, yet it is not its son."

mani. "Well, and what then? With which of the three did your Didian go a-hunting?"

"Didian didn't—ha! ha! ha!—go a-hunting at all!" said the lad, transported with laughter. "His parents didn't know which of the three to acknowledge as pre-eminent."

"Tell us another story, little Delimani," asked his audience.

"How can I?" the lad teased them. "It's late already. I want to sleep."

"A story!" said M. Buoys, and pushed a caramel between the smiling lips.

Laughing and noisily crunching his sweet, Delimani said:

"I'll tell you an old yarn of how a certain man, living in the time of the Kaarta kingdom, came to the throne by means of a needle."

"Oh!" exclaimed the listeners.

"'Oh!' or no 'Oh!' that is exactly what happened to this man!" Delimani answered. "Listen and see!

"In a certain poor family the youngest son, as he was eating 'kus-kus,' declared that he would change a needle into a chicken's leg, for he was tired of eating pottage without meat. Everybody clapped him on the shoulder and laughed at him, calling him a crafty Moor. But the youth found a widow who wanted a needle. He went to her and said:

"'I will give you this needle for the leg of a fat chicken.'

"'Done!' said the woman, and gave him what he wished.

"When the young man showed his family the fat

chicken leg they all began to jeer at him again. 'For once in your life you have found someone more stupid than yourself!' they said.

"'Oh no!' Sendiuba answered (for so the astute youth was called). 'Do you know what the proverb means: "Ntori na kono-fen be ye digon ta ye"?' [10]

"'We know!' said his astonished relations.

"'Then know also that I am a hornbill, and the frog and its internals are life. But they also belong to me. I get from them all that I need!'

"'You are foolish and presumptuous!' his elder brother decided.

"'What is said over a dead lion is not said in the eyes of a living one!' Sendiuba answered with a proverb,[11] and added: 'You shall see; with this chicken's leg I shall get a horse!'

"His family began to scoff at him, but his father said:

"'Let him do as he wishes!'

"Senduba went and sat down at the side of the road beyond the village. Along this road the soldiers of the king were passing. Seeing one who was dragging behind with exhaustion and hunger, the youngster proposed the exchange of his chicken's leg for the warrior's horse. The latter gladly agreed, but having devoured the meat, he struck his horse and galloped off. Sendiuba only smiled and went to the king.

"'King!' said the youngster, 'you have done me an injury, for one of your soldiers has eaten a chicken's leg

[10] "The frog and its contents belong to the hornbill" (a bird which lives on frogs).

[11] "Mi be fo uaraba su ku na, o te fo a gnaname gnan-la" (*Moussa Travelé*, p. 42).

belonging to me, and has not let me have the saddle-horse he promised in exchange. I demand justice!'

"So the king commanded the soldier to give his horse to the villager.

"After some time Sendiuba exchanged his horse for seven cats without any difficulty, although the whole family were in despair and abused him for all they were worth. But the youngster collected his cats and set off into the world. Coming to a country where the rats were devouring the king's granaries and threatened the entire population, he announced that he would give them his cats to struggle with the noxious animals if for every cat he received a young and strong slave.

"Sendiuba's family immediately grew wealthy, for with the seven strong slaves they ploughed up fresh fields and gathered an abundant harvest of millet, pea-nuts and mandioc. But this did not last long, for one day the youngster began to meditate.

"'What is troubling you?' asked his mother.

"'Smoke rises from beneath every roof!' Sendiuba said with an old saying as usual, wishing by it to convey that everyone had his own cares.

"'Tell us! We will willingly help you!' the family exclaimed.

"The youngster gazed at them all with sorrowful eyes, and said with a shrug of his shoulder:

"'I remind you of the old proverb: "It's no use trying to sell a ring to a leper!" He no longer has any fingers, so he won't purchase the ring. You have no confidence in me, so you will not understand me. Why should I waste my breath uselessly?'

" 'What do you want to do?' his father asked.

" 'I intend to change our seven strong, young slaves for one dead body,' Sendiuba muttered.

"The family fell into anger and despair, but without saying another word the youngster called the slaves and together with them left the village.

"In a neighbouring country the king suddenly died. Hearing of this, Sendiuba went to the king's sons and said to them:

" 'Your father's corpse is of no use to you. Give it to me in exchange for seven slaves!'

"The avaricious sons agreed, and when the contract had been confirmed in the presence of the elders and marabouts, Sendiuba took the corpse and ordered it to be dragged in the dust and mud of the streets and to be scourged with a whip.

"On seeing this the entire population were aroused, and were going to kill the audacious man who was dishonouring the corpse of their king. But when the crowd surrounded the youngster, he said:

" 'I respect the corpse of your dead ruler, but I wished to show you the character of those who are occupying his throne. Demand that they should redeem these remains, and I shall punish the wicked sons!'

"The crowd made its way to the royal estate. And Sendiuba returned the king's dead body to his family, taking seventy fresh slaves in exchange for each slave he had given, and went back to his own village. After some time, observing that the people hated the royal sons for their covetousness and the insult to their father after

his death, Sendiuba, arming his slaves, fell on the neighbouring state and seized the throne.

"The jealous brothers of the new ruler secretly cursed him, calling him a 'cunning Moor'; but on hearing of this from his 'groits,' King Sendiuba smiled and repeated:

"'When the ape cannot reach the ripe banana with his hand, he says it is sour.'

"From that time forth his prosperity became proverbial.

"I'm going to sleep. My eyes are sticking together," Delimani exclaimed, and ran to the fire where he had his couch—a heap of dry grass and aromatic carité leaves. Yet on the way he managed in full flight to pull a sleeping Negro's nose, and suddenly glancing at the moon, called out the common, popular riddle:

"One lump of dough whitens the whole river! [12] Guess what is meant by that!"

"The moon! the moon!" answered several sleepy voices.

Slowly the crowd dispersed. As I lay in my tent I heard the voices of the jungle, the quiet murmur of the water sucking through the stones of the river-bed, and the rustle of bats flying around.

By day and night the bush unfolded its mysteries before us. One day when we were in the jungle my tracker began with his knife to cut down piece after piece of some kind of liana and to suck at it greedily. When he noticed that I was watching him inquiringly he explained:

[12] Degé—Kun—kele e ba dzi dié (*Moussa Travelé*, p. 52).

"This is the 'ngaro,' a liana which contains much, much water: The good spirits scattered it in places deprived of water so that people should not perish of thirst. 'Ngaro' has long roots, so long that they always reach to a river or a stream and draw the water out of them."

I do not know whether the "ngaro" is so genuine an aqueduct; I rather think that its roots, like those of other desert vegetation, run deep into the earth in the search for water.

In the jungle I observed two enormous hawks fighting over a snake. It was a furious struggle, carried on with a menacing chatter and hissing and by powerful blows with their claws. The struggle was interrupted by a crested "white eagle" (*Spizactus bellicosus*), a magnificent bird of prey, which, I am told, carries off lambs and children. It dropped like a stone, menacingly bristling the feathers on its head and emitting a warlike scream. The hawks flew off, puling mournfully, for meanwhile the eagle was tearing the snake to pieces.

As one day I was advancing behind a fire which was consuming the undergrowth as it spread, I observed a strange bird flying high over the flaming jungle. When it dropped nearer the ground I could discern its almost jet-black feathering, with a broad, light band on the wings and a mobile crest on its black head. It executed unexpected leaps and turns in the air, somersaulted as do certain kinds of doves, dropped unexpectedly, almost touching the flames with its breast, and again in the twinkling of an eye soared to a great height. Finally it dropped to the summit of a naked baobab and settled there. I then discerned its red legs and red beak. The

bird abruptly puffed itself up and changed into a dark ball, erecting the feathers on its breast and head. Then I recognized it. Before me was the "frolic" hawk (*Helotarsus ecaudatus*), an enemy of snakes.

Faramusa-Keita swore that if the shadow of this hawk falls on a man it is a sign of approaching death. In East Africa the Negroes call this hawk the "bird doctor," for they declare that it brings healing herbs from a distance. Other African peoples have given it the name of "air monkey."

During the fires which destroyed the bush in the neighbourhood of the Baoule, I was entranced by a struggle of which I was the involuntary witness. While resting in the shade of a tree after a hunt. I saw a large, greyish-brown bird, with black-tipped wings and tail, running with head stretched forward, and having several black feathers hanging from its neck. Evidently it was pursuing something in the grass. Finally it ran into a completely burnt-out glade, and here a diverting struggle took place.

The bird threw itself on the enemy, which I could see only when it raised itself from the ground. It was a snake, and when it inflated and extended its neck I realized that it was the poisonous Naya. Like a stick flung by a strong arm the snake fell on the bird, but the latter, covering its legs with one wing as though with a shield, beat the prey into the air with the other, caught it with its beak and began to tug. From a distance the bird seemed like a crane owing to its very long legs, but it was a secretary bird (*Serpentarius secretarius*), so called because its overhanging crest is like a quill pen stuck behind

the ear—a trifling reason and a poor resemblance to justify giving it so prosaic a name!

I asked the Negroes how they called this bird, the determined enemy of the snakes.

"It is the 'devil's horse,' " they answered.

Splendid! A powerful name, and one simply imploring for a legend. Decidedly Europe reduces everything to the level of suburbia, the archiprosaic!

"The snakes flee from districts where a married couple of 'devil's horses' are staying," Buro-So explained to me.

"They are afraid of these nimble and courageous birds," cried another.

"Seran te saya sa—fear is no obstacle to death!" observed a third, resorting to a proverb. "The snakes are afraid of the 'devil's horses,' but they perish from their talons and beaks. The 'devil's horses' know where there are snakes and where the jungle is beginning to catch fire, so they fly there and hunt after the snakes fleeing before the fire. . . ."

On my return to Bamako we packed our continually increasing baggage on to a motor-lorry and sent it on in advance to Sikasso, towards the frontier of the Upper Volta Colony. We ourselves spent a last evening in the company of M. Terrasson de Fougères and his efficient fellow-workers. But besides us there were other guests that evening in the governor's palace. Certain parliamentary representatives and colonial inspectors who were travelling around West Africa had arrived, among them a completely Gallicized Pole, M. Lasotzki, the cousin of

our Consul-General in Paris and also one of the directors of the firm which is building the port at Gdynia.

After supper, coffee and cooling drinks were handed round on the terraced roof of the palace.

It was a tranquil, moonlit night. The air, drowsy and still, flooded with the heavenly light of the moon and heavy with the heat coming from the walls, the earth and the palms, recalled a motionless, inanimate lagoon. Here, on the summit of Kuluba, my wife played Chopin. As though weary and swooning, the strains of the violin lazily floated into the distance, where glimmered the ribbon of the Niger, all glitter and sparkle and enmisted with a vapour of trembling rays, meditating on what had passed, to return never . . . never. . . .

When the melody died away the sounds seemed to fade and die over Bamako immersed in the glooms, slowly eddying downward and floating farther and farther over the summits of the sombre trees, until they dropped somewhere above the Niger with a last quiet sigh. . . .

Next morning at dawn, seen off by our kindly and friendly hosts, we started out by motor-car for Kulikoro. The road ran out to the very bank of the Niger, where one of my assistants quite unexpectedly caught a very beautiful water bird. It had black feathers with a green sheen and a long, slender, snaky neck which passed into a flat head and an amazingly sharp beak. On the back and wings the bird was marked with broad white bands. It was a *Plotus levaillanti*. Later on I saw the nests of these birds, built of dry branches on bank-side trees.

The plotus seeks its prey in the water, diving excellently and swimming swiftly like a cormorant—belonging, for that matter, to the same family (*Steganopodes*).

Close to this spot, where the rocks bar the channel of the river, we halted by the stones of Moribabagu. These are three hewn stones, such as we found in simply innumerable quantities in the Minusinsk steppes of southern Siberia—a region of dolmens and prehistoric cemeteries.

Here, on the Niger, it is said that during a war with his neighbours one of the Kaartan kings thrust his staff into the ground and declared that he would retreat no further. However, it seems to me that these stones are the common altars of the fetishists, who acknowledge the existence of the heavenly trinity: Ammo, the almighty ruler of the world; Tong, the fruitful earth; and their son Melek, the mighty destroyer. The traces of fire around the stones confirmed my opinion that they were the altar of the divine trinity, and unquestionably of Asiatic or Egyptian origin.[13] Ammo is very reminiscent of Ammon Ra, worshipped in Thebes, and Melek of Moloch, both in name and in his destructive cruel characteristics.

At Kulikoro, to which a railway runs from Bamako, we crossed by means of a ferry to the other side of the Niger, which here is abundant in fish, crocodiles and manatees. Fish large and small, continually splashing around the ferry, we saw indeed; but as for crocodiles and manatees, we heard about them from the fishermen. So I leave these water monsters to their conscience.

The road ran through the jungle, parched and yellow as everywhere else, and already partially cleared in places

[13] Horus, Osiris and Isis.

by fires. Small antelopes, guinea-fowl, bustards and partridges, sometimes a hornbill or a crested crane, fluttered off, hearing the rattle of our motor-lorry now speeding in a cloud of dust right behind us. On the road we visited the experimental cotton plantations in Niéné Balé and Barueli which I have already mentioned when speaking of the "programme Carde." In the evening we arrived at Segu, a large outpost situated on the bank of the Niger, and the residence of the provincial administrator.

The administrator met us. He was M. Battesti, an old, expert colonial official. We were accommodated in a very comfortable little hospice house surrounded by orange and mango-trees. In their thicket the gammier bird called discreetly, bats squeaked and hissed, and frogs croaked. The Niger, bathed in the light of the moon, glistened like a steel sword blade; the distant sandy shoals glimmered white as though sprinkled with snow. My wife and I sat long on the verandah of our little house, gazing, listening, and thanking God that the world is so enchanting and delightful.

Next day we were present at an unsuccessful fishing expedition, and in the afternoon we rode to the plantation of Sama, where the director, M. Humbert, showed us the enterprise of the Parisian banker, Hirsch.[14] On our return from Sama I visited Segu, and in particular the native settlements, where again, as in Dakar, I noticed inimical glances and unfriendly mutterings among the Negroes when I made my way into the labyrinth of narrow little streets. Evidently with the red sand from the Sahara the wind always brings the infection of Mus-

[14] Described at the beginning of the chapter.

sulman hatred for the white people, the followers of Christ.

We observe this hostility as far as Kutiala, where the anarchically disposed Minianka tribe has forced the French authorities to tighten the reins. After sunset, when a black sergeant trumpets the evening call, everybody must preserve quiet. One may not hear tam-tams of laughter and amusement continuing the whole night in Kutiala, and the natives must obtain the permission of the administrator for every wedding or funeral tam-tam held. In Kutiala we visited a factory for cleaning cotton and packing it in bales [15] for export, a finely kept fruit and vegetable garden, and also a farm-school established for the natives by the government.

Early next morning we moved on to the south, and before evening we arrived at Sikasso, the ancient capital of the former Negro kings. Evidently those kings were powerful and warlike, for although they had built a large town, several lines of walls, now destroyed, surrounded this martial camp. Modern Sikasso has been transformed into a large and rich commercial settlement, with several buildings in it belonging to the French administration.

The administrator, whose name I do not remember—a colourless blonde with neurasthenic face, movements and voice, a typical, ordinary provincial official who hated the life in the colonies—invited us to dinner. Here we met the Prince and Princess de Croy and Count and Countess Pomereu. They were returning from the Ivory Coast,

[15] The district supplies 2,000 tons of cotton annually. Its cleansing and export is carried out by the before-mentioned organization, which belongs to the "Association cotonnière coloniale," founded by French filament industrialists.

where they had had some excellent hunting, in proof of which they were carrying to Paris the handsome tusks of an elephant killed close to Buafle. We spent a couple of hours in pleasant gossip with them. In the early evening our new acquaintances set out for Bamako, while we went to visit the picturesque surroundings of Sikasso.

Continually startling partridges and guinea-fowl, and passing by villages belonging to Samokos and Toucouleur tribes, we arrived by quite a good road at Missiri-Koro.

A picturesque but menacing group of rocks unexpectedly arises on the burnt bush-covered plain. It is a tomb in the cemetery of the mountains. The fragments of their former masses are scattered over hundreds of miles around, and have been disintegrated into coarse gravel and larger pieces of rock. Missiri-Koro is like an oasis in the greyish yellow plain, for around the dark rocks grow mimosas, pseudo-mahogany-trees (*Khaya senegalensis*), "duguras," rosewood, and still other unknown kinds with round fruits covered with what looks like red velvet.

One of our Negro chauffeurs caught a little frog in the bushes and killed it without mercy. When I asked him why he displayed such cruelty to an innocent creature, he explained that cattle which eat grass soiled by frog's excrement catch a fatal stomach disease. This idea was no novelty to me, for I had heard of it before in Guinea.

The track leads through a thicket of bushes, trees and bamboo undergrowth to a circular, grass-grown spot surrounded on all sides with rock. In a small grotto, from which a spring was flowing, we saw a swarm of bees. We were forced to a hasty flight.

In the grottos and the passages stretching beneath them nest large and small bats of various kinds. When we threw stones into the openings clouds of these little animals burst into the main cavern, darted about and struck against one another under the roof, squeaking and startling still others which were hanging from it like black stalactites.

One of the chauffeurs, who had often visited Missiri-Koro with the governor, told me that when Sikasso was still the seat of the king So-Naba, during sieges of the town treasures and arms were hidden in the caves, and sometimes even the last battle raged among these gloomy rocks.

When we emerged from the cavern the apes living on the inaccessible summits welcomed us with an angry chatter and a hail of stones, startling wild doves and coloured thrushes out of the crevices and other unseen hiding-places. Everywhere I saw the traces of Europeans—tins from preserved foods, broken bottles, greasy newspapers, and remains of recent banquets.

I was astonished by one circumstance. The usually very inquisitive natives did not run after us when our motor-cars made their way from the neighbouring village on to the side-road to Missiri-Koro; and even our chauffeurs, who had wandered long over the whole world—for one had sailed as stoker on sea-vessels and the other had spent several years in British and Spanish colonies—would not take one step into the cavern after us, but remained outside like frightened children.

After visiting the cavern I realized the reason for this. Unquestionably these caves and subterranean passages

not only had their traditions and legends, but they formed a "sacred spot" in which dwelt the spirit of ancestors, good and evil gods, invisible magicians and the demons and monsters attending them. The fathers of the old Negroes of to-day came here for nocturnal mysteries, to offer bloody sacrifices, or to counsel with mighty magicians. The cavern of Missiri-Koro formed a mysterious natural temple, full of incomprehensible, enigmatic whispers, rustles, sighs and groans. Now that the whites, who know no fear of spirits or demons, seek shade and amusement in these sacred grottos, the jinns disturbed by them are continually angry, and burn with revenge; and so no native, not even the most daring, has the courage to pass beneath the roof of the desecrated temple.

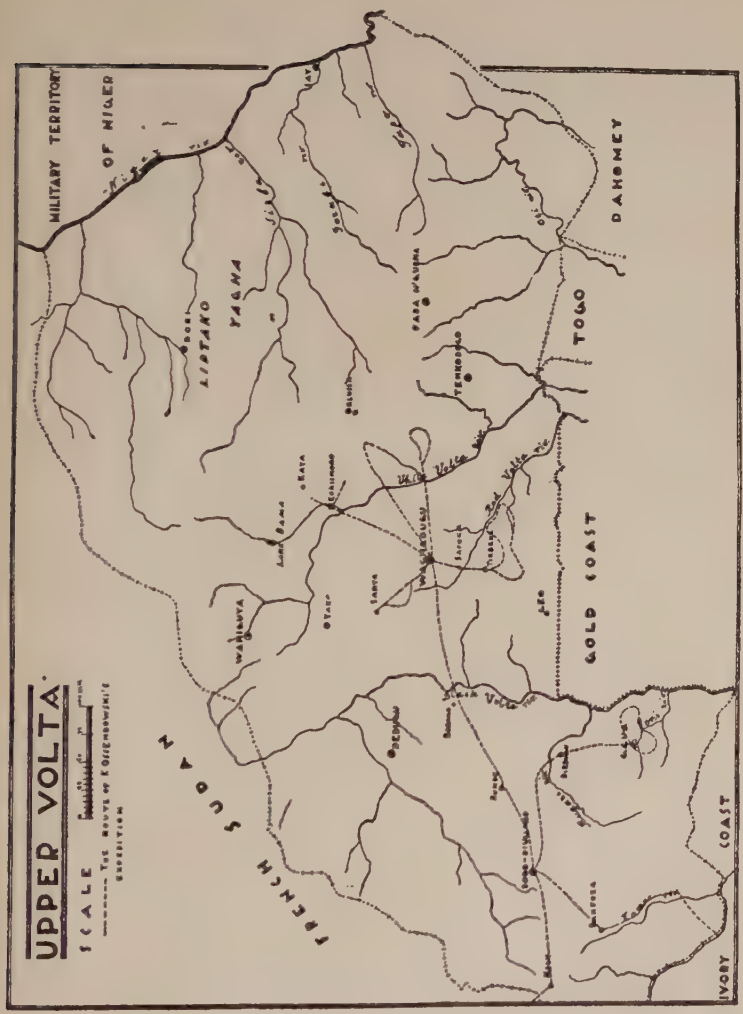
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LAND OF ENFORCED INDUSTRY

UNTIL recently the colony of Upper Volta formed the southern part of the Sudan, but some years ago it was established as separate territory. The new colony was given the name of the River Volta, which here is divided into three streams—the White, Red, and Black, which, passing through the British Gold Coast Colony, at last flow together and fall into the Gulf of Guinea.

As the youngest of all the French colonies, Upper Volta has a great impetus of its own, but it is at present meeting with great difficulties in its independent existence. Its impetus finds expression in the enforced enthusiasm with which the natives, under the influence of the energetic governor, M. E. Hesling, have thrown themselves into agricultural labour, and in particular into the planting of cotton. It is a colony where the policy of compelling the natives to work and of creating a class of small native capitalists has had successful application.

I must be allowed a digression to make a further classification of the colonies of French West Africa visited by me. The first was Senegal, the keynote of whose development is compulsory European teaching and the civilization of natives; then there is Guinea, whose keynote is respect for the Negro traditions and assistance to


UPPER VOLTA
SCALE
MILITARY TERRITORY
OF NIGER
FRENCH SUDAN
GOLD COAST
TOGO
DAHOMEY
IVORY COAST

them in their struggle with Nature; the Sudan, the land where a tremendous direct effort is being put forth by the white race; and Volta, the colony where the governing principle is enforced labour for the welfare of the population. These fundamentally differing colonial policies make a journey through this section of the black continent extremely instructive, especially from the point of view of acquiring a knowledge of the psychology of the native peoples.

The plain of Upper Volta is quite densely populated [1] with various native tribes. The bulk of the population [2] is composed of the Mossi tribe, numbering about 1,800,000 persons. The remainder is made up of Gurunsi, Lobi, Bambara, Diula, Nioniussi, Nuruma, Bobo, Sissala, Soninki, Peuhl and Tuareg tribes on the north-east of the colony, in the expanses lying along the Niger.

All these tribes, with the exception of the most ancient, the Gurunsi and Bobo, are intruders; they drove out the former possessors of the land or engulfed them almost without a trace. Even the Mossi tribe, the only one in Africa with an ancient and strong social and state organization, are immigrants from the south. On their road they met with the Minissis tribe, absorbed them and annexed their possessions. Ever since the Minissis tribe has formed a separate, respected, almost "magical" clan in the society of the victorious Mossis. The other tribes have no connection whatever with one another, as the Scottish traveller, Mungo Park, and after him the German investigator, Krauz, observed in their day.

[1] Ninety people per square mile.
[2] Three million people.

Upper Volta is unquestionably a rich country, supplying much agricultural produce and cattle. [3]

In its encouragement of agriculture the government is introducing American ploughs into use and teaching the employment of draught cattle and also manures; however, they are turning their greatest attention to the culture of cotton, a somewhat artificial crop for the natives, but one necessary to France. For this purpose experimental demonstration fields have been organized, where the selection of cotton-seeds cultivated on non-irrigated lands is carried on. The results are already worthy of note, for the short fibre (less than an inch long) of the native cotton is gradually being cultivated to grow longer (1¼ to 1½ inches).

None the less I repeat that here cotton is an artificial crop, and one the value of which is not entirely clear to the natives. The chiefs, with their superior intellect, seeing the profit to be obtained from the plantation of cotton, are continually enlarging the area of their fields, and resort to draught animals, ploughs, manures, and even the partial irrigation of the fields; nevertheless, the great mass of the population submits rather unwillingly to those instructions of the administration which aim at the development of cotton cultivation in the colony.[4]

[3] Agriculture yields annually 1,500,000 tons of millet, 300,000 tons of maize, 30,000 tons of rice, 10,000 to 15,000 tons of pea-nuts, and about 7,000 tons of cotton; in addition, the natives produce beans, peas, mandioc, sweet potatoes (*Ipomaea batatus*), "fabirama," castor-oil, capok, hemp (da), caoutchouc, carité, tobacco, pepper, "sumbara," etc.

[4] From one hectare (2.47 acres) the natives gather 180 to 225 lb. of cotton fibre, but the practice of the experimental fields has pointed to the possibility of collecting 1,575 lb. per hectare, and even of raising the harvest of fibre to 2,475–2,700 lb.

The traders and the government send motor-lorries to the settlements, where there are territorial warehouses of cotton gathered from the whole district, pay for it the fixed price,[5] and carry it to the ports, shipping the raw cotton to France.

The other wealth of the colony is cattle.[6] The local breeds of horned cattle weigh up to 1,600 lb., and yield up to seven quarts of milk daily; the sheep and rams weigh up to 225 lb., and supply good wool and meat. The introduction of breeds crossed with South African merinoes is gradually improving the colonial type of these domestic animals. Most of the cattle are driven to the British Gold Coast Colony.[7] The condition of the cattle is fairly good, although the tse-tse fly and various epidemics sometimes make heavy inroads into the stocks. However, with an increase in the number of veterinary surgeons and their assistants, and with the organization of a zoötechnical service, disasters of this kind will be gradually eliminated.

As I have already mentioned, Upper Volta is a young colony, and its economic possibilities have not yet been fully investigated, nor does it possess a well-developed trading organization.

Of the mineral riches there are known to be deposits of gold on the lands of the Lobi tribe in the Gau prov-

[5] 0.80 to one franc per kilo, or 2¼ lb.

[6] In 1924 there were 432,000 head of cows and oxen, 54,000 head of horse, 689,000 sheep and rams, 658,000 goats, 55,000 asses and 1,700 pigs (reared by the colonists) (*vide L'Afrique Occidentale Française*, Paris, 1926; *La Presse Coloniale (Haute Volta)*, 1926; *Rapport du Gouverneur de Haute Volta; Note au sujet de la Situation Commerciale en Haute Volta*, 1926).

[7] Exported: 57,000 oxen, 40,000 sheep, 4,000 goats, 400 asses, and 300 horses.

ince, and iron ore in the districts around Bobo-Diulasso; while in the region of Waghadugu there are deposits of granite (pegmatite) and kaolin. I saw all these deposits, but in addition in the beds of dried-up streams I occasionally observed lumps of copper ore. Deposits of this useful metal will almost certainly be discovered the more so as the Mossi tribe know of copper and have used it for ages in their daily life.

Upper Volta's natural riches justify hopes of its swift development in the future, but for this very reason efforts should be exerted in one most important direction. Upper Volta has no outlet whatever for its natural produce, and in the present state of communications within the country the colony is unable to export it. The existing motor-roads leading from the capital, Waghadugu, to Bamako (555 miles) and to Buke, where the railway to the port Grand Bassam (520 miles) begins, as well as the roads between the capital and the more important settlements of the colony, are inadequate; for they are seasonal roads, and usable exclusively in the dry season. Without a railway linking its capital with seaports and with other railways, Upper Volta cannot adequately fulfil its economic role. The first stage of a transport development programme would be the laying down of a railway running from Grand Bassam to Buke through Bobo-Diulasso and Waghadugu, to be continued to Bamako or Kulikoro.

In this direction Governor Hesling is making energetic efforts. But one wonders what will happen to the cotton cultivation after the introduction of railways and the organization of transport. As I have already indi-

cated, the local production of a large quantity of cotton is an enforced act, and in addition it is a crop which demands great effort. However, there exists one plant which yields a splendid revenue—the arachide. The soil of Upper Volta is no worse than that of Senegal for the cultivation of these nuts, so may not the easy and indigenous cultivation of arachides put an end to the difficult and expensive cultivation of cotton when the problem of communications has been regulated?

Immediately we had crossed the frontier of Upper Volta we had opportunities of observing the native plantations of cotton developed and supported by the administration. Cotton was being cultivated by the former inhabitants of the Congo region, the Diulas, who now occupy the western part of the colony, and also by the Bobo people, who inhabit the south of the Bobo-Diulasso province.

From the Sudanese frontier to the administrative outpost we passed through a rich agricultural country. The natives had already wrested from the jungle large expanses of fields (where we were continually seeing cotton plantations, fields of millet, maize and calabashes), and smaller fields surrounding the enclosures of the villagers, in which they were growing mandioc, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, arachides, peas, and da or hemp, used for making lines and also for hashish—"kif."

The villages of the Diula and Bobo Negroes have a strange appearance. Small but like beehives, plastered together of canes and mud and stuck one against another like honeycombs, winding corridors of little streets—such are these villages. The finely built women walk with

a striding step. The elder women have the upper or lower lip pierced, and in it wear either a ring or a piece of white wood or bone. I met with women having swollen throats, sufferers from goitre. The women wear only bunches of green leaves in front and behind, but on their necks and breasts they wear many jewels.

We saw an abundance of cattle and fowls in the villages. We were amazed by the extraordinarily fat cocks and hens, but we soon learnt the reason for this, for we watched the feeding of these domestic fowl. Out of the bush girls came running, bringing food for the chickens: baskets full of termites, putrid meat and mandioc. The chickens swiftly gobbled up all the insects, and the girls ran back to the jungle with the baskets of fetid meat, setting them close to the termites' mounds. During the nights the insects take possession of the baskets, and after sunrise go to feed the chickens. It is a cheap and very good food! Everywhere in the villages there are crowds, hosts of chickens!

And large quantities are very necessary, as the altars built in the villages—red-painted conical pillars about eighteen inches high—bear witness. These are altars in honour of the manly, almighty divinity Ammo; and on these altars the priests of Earth pour out an abundance of the blood of sacrificial hens. A similar ceremony is performed on the household altars dedicated to the local gods or the spirits of ancestors.

When I saw this conical pillar for the first time, out of the dusk of centuries emerged before me the phallic stone of Baal, the black stone of the Lamaic dignitary Bogdo-Gegen from Urga, certain sacred rocks which con-

fer fertility on the women of Morocco and Algiers, and certain columns to be found in Indian and Japanese temples; while red was used as implying sanctity and authority, like the purple of royalty and the scarlet of cardinals.

But perhaps the colour was evidence of gods brought here to the heart of the black continent by mighty invaders with red skin?

We halted for the night in the large, wealthy settlement of Bobo-Diulasso. Several streets shaded with lofty trees led to the European quarter, where besides the residence of the administrator there are military barracks, offices, a small hospital, a garage, a small factory for the cleaning of cotton, and trading warehouses. On one side lies a dark grey mass of little Bobo huts, hidden behind high walls forming dark and narrow streets. Low doors in the walls lead to the interior of the native dwellings.

We spent a very pleasant evening with the administrator, M. Bellot, and his family. He is an experienced and consummate colonial. As later the same evening we were sitting on the steps of the verandah, an old Negro approached us—very old, for silver hairs glistened in the little curls of his bristly poll.

He sat down and listened, observing us attentively. I called an interpreter.

"Will he not come here?" the old man abruptly asked.

"Who?" I answered with a question.

"The sergeant. . . ."

"I don't know!" I said. "There's nothing for him to do here, so I suppose he won't come."

"That's good!" said the old man. "I have come to you with a request, 'governor.'"

I was astonished by my unexpected elevation in rank. "I am not the governor at all!" I protested.

The old man smiled cunningly and whispered: "I know —I know you don't want it to be known who you are. But I was watching as the administrator met you; and your cook said that the authorities receive you everywhere with respect, that you have come from Paris, governor. . . ."

"Well, then, let it be so!" I agreed, knowing that I should not be able to convince my visitor. "What do you want to speak to me about?"

"I've come to ask you for help!" he exclaimed, raising his hands imploringly. "I was in the council of elders, and I asked the priest of Earth to intercede for me—for he alone can carry the prayers of men to the spirit of Earth and make offerings to the spirit—yet the sentence was the same. . . . I am very unhappy!" whispered the old Negro.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"I have three sons. Two of them remained on the land, the third, Bié, was in the army, and on returning to the village he became a plague to everybody. Bié began to carry off our neighbors' cattle, to steal the millet from the barns and to sell it to wicked people. The judges have already several times tied him to a tree with ropes and kept him there until I could pay to those injured the quantity of millet and oil demanded. When I could pay no more, on the order of the council of elders my son was beaten with sticks. But it was no use, and Bié again stole and stole! So the judge sentenced him to exile from the village. He returned three years ago, but

he had not altered at all. During a quarrel he killed the son of the headman. In accordance with custom, I had to give my youngest daughter to the family of the murdered man, to be the wife of his brother."

"What for?" I exclaimed.

"How do you mean—'what for?'" said the Negro in amazement. "In order that she should bear a son, for in him the soul of the dead man would settle. But Nunuma did not have a child, and she died. . . ."

"Died?"

"Yes!" the old man sighed. "The family of the dead man was angry with her, persecuted her, begrudged food to her; her husband beat her and treated her badly, forcing her to work beyond her strength. . . . Nunuma died!"

I felt quite helpless in face of the family tragedy of this poor fellow, so I asked him again what I could do for him.

"Hear me to the end, governor!" the old man asked in a humble tone, shaking his grizzling head. "By paying for the crimes of my son and losing from the home such a good worker as Nunuma was, our family became very poor; through need, heavy labour and sorrow I am now approaching the end of my life. At times I feel that my soul has already split into two. One part is ready to break away and to make for the sunlit region lying beyond the sun in order to unite with the Great Spirit of the world; the other is already selecting an abode for itself on this earth close to my enclosure and in the bush, when after my death my body is laid in the earth, and when the week of funeral sacrifices has passed, I am old, very old! . . . I remember the former times, when

none here had ever heard of the white men. So old am I! The souls of my ancestors come to me at night and summon me to themselves. My time is approaching. . . ."

He sighed heavily, and after a while continued, allowing the interpreter time to explain his words.

"When we grew poor I was compelled to take two new women workers into the house in order to increase our fields, for the old fields would no longer bear millet and maize. I took two young wives, Saniala and Bamga. Bamga is beautiful and young. . . . She came into my enclosure like a flower on which no insect has yet alighted to drink the sweet honey. Such was Bamga. . . . Now I shall die soon. I have no brothers . . . so everything, including my wives, will descend to Bié, my son—the criminal. He is already rubbing his hands and gazing at Bamga like a panther at a young white lamb. . . . Bamga does not wish to have him for husband . . . she says she will rather flee into the jungle and perish, for there she will be carried off by a wild animal or the inimical demons of the bush. . . . Governor, good governor! rescue me and Bamga! The judgment of the elders and the priest of Earth cannot change our laws of inheritance, but you can do all! Write a paper, command, and no one will dare to touch Bamga! Threaten my son with imprisonment, with the galleys. . . . Help me! help me!"

My position was very difficult in face of this old man, wringing his hands in despair and gazing into my eyes as though I were a powerful "gre-gre."

"Tell this man that when I arrive at Waghadugu I

shall speak about his case to the governor," I said, turning to the interpreter and handing him my note-book, so that he could write the name of my visitor in it.

When the old Bobo left me I gave him ten francs, which in cors was equal to a thousand shells. Perhaps he will be able to redeem himself from his nightmare of a Bié with them, and that vagabond will acquire another wife for himself. For in the remote corners of their country the Bobo does not pay any more for a maiden, since even in the large settlements one can buy a "good wife" for five thousand shell-cors.

The old man was very grateful to me. I fulfilled my promise and talked with the governor about grey-haired Tafa Ninki's case. However, the governor declared that the French authorities try to avoid interfering in the natives' internal life, which is restricted by the limitations of customary law.

None the less the news that the governor was passing had its consequences. In one of the villages not far from Bobo-Diulasso a woman came running to me and asked for protection against a magician. But this affair was too complicated, and even cors could be of no assistance, for the woman's fifteen-year-old son had died. The Negroes are convinced that death at a young age is always unnatural, and caused by a magician or spirit devouring the soul of the man. And so it was in this case.

"Two young men carried the body of my dead son through the village, so that the dead might say who had taken his soul. At that time he indicated a stream which flows past the village. So we made sacrifices to the spirit

of the stream, for evidently someone of the family must have angered him. But in the night in my sleep I saw a man gnawing and tugging at my son's breast. Then I ordered him to be carried through the village a second time, until with a convulsive movement he indicated Kalefa, who happened to be passing. The elders acknowledged him to be an evil magician, and sentenced him to exile. Kalefa left the village, but returned in the form of a dog which comes to our enclosure every evening and howls the whole night. I ask you to send your people to shoot this dog-magician, for otherwise I am afraid lest he should carry off the soul of yet another member of the family."

But I would not shoot a strange dog, so I could do nothing for the poor woman. I advised her to pray to God and ask Him for help.

"To which of the gods?" she asked. "To the God of Earth, the jungle, the sacred tree or the stream?"

I was again plunged into embarrassment, so I silently pointed to heaven. The woman stared at me with an astonished and terrified gaze, and in it I read the despairing cry:

"That God is so far away that He will not hear the prayers, entreaties and homage of the people of the whole village, and what then of so poor, afflicted a woman as I! Could I dare to direct a mother's request to Heaven, when the priest himself addresses his prayers only to the god of Earth?"

While travelling to Waghadugu I observed a crowd of natives surrounding a man who on seeing us fled into the

jungle. The interpreter explained that he was a "nion," or evil magician, who with the aid of a small enchanted wand was unveiling the past, the present and the future. The inquirers hold the magician by the hand, and in a low tone put various questions to him; when the wand rises and strikes the earth it signifies an affirmative answer to the question asked.

In certain villages live "Nenso," or manufacturers of fetishes, curative amulets, and masks and extravagant attire for the initiated into the secret society of "Dus," when they make the round of the village driving out evil spirits or bringing rain to the fields, as the traveller Binger declares.[8] For that matter the "Dus" society is not lacking in all the other characteristics of existing secret organizations.[9]

A fine motor-road leads from Bobo-Diulasso through Hunde to Baromo. This settlement, which possesses large warehouses of cotton brought in by the natives, stands on a plain across which flows the River Black Volta. In addition, Baromo possesses the jolly, witty administrator, M. Paul Huchard; his hospitable, pleasant wife; a fine garden with strawberries, cabbages, salads and other European vegetables; an inn, dirty and over-populated with termites, lizards, and spiders; a ferry over the river, tse-tse flies, and . . . the "Bar Volta."

This last is a little hut where arrivals from the other side of the river—peasants, chauffeurs, and those with business at the administrator's office—can rest and be refreshed in the shade. By this improvised "bar" stands

[8] *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée,* vol. i, p. 378.
[9] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan,* Paris, E. Larose, 1912, p. 78.

a post with a sign-board bearing a humorous inscription composed by M. Huchard:

VOLTA BAR

DOLO MOUSSEUX ET CACKOUETTES [10]

and the drawing of a Negro drinking beer from a small calabash.

In the Huchard's drawing-room I noticed an old pirate's flag with a death's-head for device; and I could not help thinking that until quite recently the white race would have been absolutely justified in using this common standard as the emblem of all the European peoples who have invaded Africa.

The active and jovial M. Huchard has to deal with 53,000 natives, belonging to various tribes: the Peuhls, Bobo, Mamrkas, Kos, Gurunsi, and Mossi peoples. The Bobo tribe constitutes 50 per cent of the entire population; there are no Christians here despite the proximity of the White Fathers' mission in Waghadugu; there are 6,000 adherents of Islam, the remaining 47,000 being fetishists.

However, the administrator, an old Parisian, succeeds in managing them, and the merry representative of the French administration, with his bold, sincere face, is welcomed by the natives with benevolent laughter. Possibly they would welcome him still more benevolently if they had heard M. Huchard in conversation with me

[10] The Volta Bar. Foaming millet-beer and roasted pea-nuts.

very seriously defending the interests of the native population against certain methods of European traders.

The most idealistic characteristics of French independent audacious and humanistic thought flamed in the burning speech of this jovial official, who had assumed the cloak of a jester, donning it perhaps in order to give utterance not only to paradoxes but even to truth, and to do so calmly and without unpleasant consequences.

When we had the opportunity of visiting M. Huchard again some hours later, our meeting with him was a source of very real pleasure to us.

On leaving Baromo, we had before us 112 miles of road to the capital of Upper Volta, the large town of Waghadugu. The road runs continually through yellow, burnt bush, with bare baobabs, capok-trees, mimosas and green carités shooting up to the pale heaven. The sun grilled so terribly that we could not touch the scorching leather cushions of the car.

From time to time my assistants jumped out and shot at antelopes rendered helpless by the heat and dozing in the shade of trees, or at large hornbills and grey herons with beaks gaping wide. It was a populous district, for everywhere we saw fields of cotton, millet and maize, and villages surrounded with numerous granary buildings; natives streaming with perspiration were walking lazily along the paths, carrying baskets full of snow-white cotton; on the road we frequently met Negroes drawing two-wheeled European trucks, loaded with cotton to be carried to the warehouses at Baromo or Waghadugu.

We arrived at the capital at two o'clock. Wagha-

dugu, which is very large and scattered over a great area, made a strange impression on me, but for a long time I could not understand what were the associations it aroused. Finally I managed to define them. I had a feeling that I had entered some Assyrian or Babylonian city re-excavated from the sands. The one-storied houses, of a heavy rectangular architecture, with flat roofs and of a monotonous dead-grey colour, stood along astonishingly broad streets, where the freshly planted little trees of the future boulevards had not yet succeeded in growing to full height. In time each of these town arteries will be divided into two parallel streets by a row of new houses.

When I took in the external appearance of Waghadugu, involuntarily I expected to see a throng of dignified men with long, curling beards and with lions strangled in their powerful fists—exactly as I had seen them on the Assyrian bas-reliefs. However, instead of these I met naked Negroes and Negresses, Sudanese in white "bubus," and Tuaregs in black and red burnouses; instead of the quiet rattle of two-wheeled chariots, the subdued rumble of passing motor-cars and the noise and jangle of heavy motor-lorries; the little asses of the Moors minced along with a light tap-tapping and the Mossi natives pattered past with their bare feet.

The spacious square, with its low buildings of cotton warehouses, its shops of French and Syrian firms, its workshops and garages, could have accommodated more than one little town within its confines. The main street is already partially shaded with mango and mimosa trees. The house and office of the local administrator

situated in the old quarter, and the picturesque edifice of the club with its tennis-court, are lost in the shadow of high trees which are chosen as their night quarters every evening by silver-white herons (*Ardea albis*). Farther on, in the eastern, newer quarter of the town, stretches a greyish-yellow plain, and on it stand still unfinished buildings of a monumental appearance, a brick works, and the houses of the senior officials. Beyond this rises the low, long, shady palace of the governor, M. P. Hesling, the office of the colonial administration, and barracks of black soldiers. Beyond, as far as the eye can reach, extends the jungle, varied here and there by sombre groves.

Our cars stopped before the building of the colonial administration. We left our visiting-cards for the governor and learnt that a house was already prepared for us, where a Parisian acquaintance, M. Delavignette, was waiting—a young and able writer, the author of the novel *Toum*. We drove to our new home, unloaded our baggage, quickly had a wash and brushed off the dust, for we had been invited to dinner with Delavignette.

In our friend's house three very beautiful native girls waited at table. They were dressed elegantly and richly, they were wearing very costly jewels, they gazed at the men with a dreamy and collusive look, and occasionally threw us a half-embarrassed, half-bantering glance.

In the evening we were invited to visit the Heslings. The pleasant, extremely intelligent Hesling family found their way to our hearts at once. In the company of the governor, his gentle wife, his two energetic sons who maintained the customs of old, traditional houses, and

his small daughters—lissom and with childish little faces of delicate features like old French miniatures—we felt thoroughly at home.

When I recall the various types of colonial governors I have met, I must confess that the French government knows whom to send to this or that colony in northern or western Africa! For beginning with Fez, Algiers and Tunis, and ending with Senegal and the Ivory Coast, the responsible posts from which France expects so much are held by such very dissimilar personalities, each with a distinctive psychology and character. The colonial authorities are sometimes vehemently attacked by certain political parties and the Press dependent on them, who frequently understand neither the conditions of work and the attitude of the subject peoples nor the plans and the real trend of thought of the man governing this or that colony.

I am greatly indebted to the governor, M. Hesling, for bringing me into touch with this interesting colony, for making me acquainted with the life of the two most original tribes—the Mossi and the Lobi—and affording me a number of experiences simply invaluable to me as a writer.

When I observed the small, old quarter of Wagha-dugu, well shaded with high trees, where the residence of the administrator, the energetic M. Michel, and the palace of the king of the Mossi tribe are situated, and where later I took in with my gaze the enormous area of town which has arisen within barely five years, I realized to the full the energy of the governor, which

has left its traces everywhere, right to the frontiers of the Gold and Ivory Coasts.

M. Hesling had evidently overcome the inimical power of the sun, and worked and lived normally in this flaming hell. Having himself burst the bonds imposed by the sunny blaze to paralyse and nullify every effort, he demanded that the natives also should exert their will, thought and energy.

The governor has emerged victorious in the duel with the flaming star, but will he be successful in carrying with him the bronze and coal-burnt people, with their sluggish, sleeping intellect, with muscles shot through with millions of sharp, poisoned arrows dropping from heaven, released by the merciless hand of the powerful Avenger for the ancient sins of their ancestors, now forgotten by the human family?

I wish him triumph in this titanic undertaking!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

KOM: MORO-NABA XXXII

FOR thousands of years, from the days of ancient history right until the arrival of the French, the Sudan was the scene of great convulsions and continual wars between the existing states and peoples. Great and well-organized kingdoms which sometimes had existed for many centuries suddenly disintegrated and vanished almost without a trace. Such a fate overtook the Gan (ninth to thirteenth centuries), the Gao (seventh to sixteenth centuries), the Segu and the Kaarta (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) empires. Great warriors, such as El Haj Omar and Samori,[1] were still spreading carnage and devastation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Only one kingdom, that of the Mossis, has lasted from the thirteenth century, and its frontiers have remained unchanged since the sixteenth century.

However, it is not to be inferred from this that the Mossis have not had stormy periods in their history. This tribe first appeared within the frontiers of the present-day Upper Volta probably in the eleventh or twelfth century, but the Mossi state reached its greatest power in the year 1333, when the Mossis conquered

[1] El Haj Omar died in 1864; Samori was taken prisoner by General Gouraud in 1898.

Timbuktu, and—after the war of 1480—Walata. In the sixteenth century the state returned to its former, still-existing frontiers, and carried on war exclusively with the unsettled neighbouring tribes of Gurunsis and Dagaris.

Strongly unified internally and possessing a social hierarchy, the Mossis became able and industrious agriculturists in a very short space of time, establishing such a powerful state that other kingdoms existing on the African continent never had the courage to resort to arms against it. With the development of agriculture the peaceable mood of the people grew and intensified.

To this has to be attributed the fact that when the first column of French troops, under the command of Lieutenant Voulet, crossed the frontiers of the Mossi kingdom, the government and the population maintained a perfect calm. From this fact the French military authorities deduced the entirely erroneous conclusion that the Mossi state was already in decline. However, when the military administrators committed a whole series of erroneous political advances, ignoring the laws and traditions of the natives, such serious complications immediately arose that French influence in the country was shaken and seriously threatened. Thanks only to the endeavours of diplomacy were they able to draw the native princes to their side, and with their help to appease the warlike mood of the Mossi people.

The head of the entire state is King Moro-Naba, who has his capital in Waghadugu. At the reception which Moro-Naba gave us I learnt the origin of the royal dynasty, for the court "griot" poet, beating a little drum,

sang several couplets which were translated to us immediately.

The "griot" sang:

"Glory, glory to our Moro-Naba! Glory to the descendants of the great Riaré, who a thousand years since carried a hard helmet made from a white calabash on his head when hunting herds of elephants! Glory to the beautiful Poko, the original mother of the rulers of our country! Glory to her who abandoned the fortified palace of her father—the king of the valiant Dagombas people [2]—and knowing no fear, made her way to the region of Tenkodogo, where the jungle was a labyrinth of tracks stamped out by the elephant, the lion and the leopard! There she met the hunter Riaré, and took him for husband. Glory to her son Uidra-ogo, the vanquisher of lions and the bloodthirsty panthers! Glory to him who possessed the fetish of his father! Glory to their great-grandson, the conqueror of the noble Minissises—the kingly Ubri, the founder of the Mossi power and the first Moro-Naba! Glory to them! Glory to our ruler! . . ."

In this ceremonial song is contained a complete short history of the dynasty. Usually it is sung at much greater length, for the "griots" enumerate and extol all the descendants of Ubri and the ancestors of the reigning king. It is an entire litany of names, for the present Moro-Naba represents the thirty-second generation of the dynasty of Ubri, the grandson of the beautiful and courageous Queen Poko and of Riaré the elephant-hunter.

[2] A tribe found in the territory of the Gold Coast.

King Moro-Naba has subject to him ten "dimma," or vassal princes, who together possess half a million subjects. At certain periods the princes present themselves at the court of Moro-Naba, the ruler of 1,300,000 Mossi people, and offer him gifts in token of their vassal loyalty and to strengthen their political relations.

The capital towns of the vassal princes are Wahiguya, Tenkodogo, Fada, N'Gurma, Bussuma, Riziem, Yako, Kaya, and Konkisitenga. The princes enjoy the title of Moro-Naba, which, however, does not convey the significance and influence of the monarch at Waghadugu. Only one of them, the prince of the Wahiguya province, rejoices in the great respect of the Mossi people, for he has the hereditary service of all the ancient amulets of Riaré himself. In this regard he is like the Tibetan dignitary, Panchen-Lama, who, possessing the relics of Buddha, is acknowledged as almost equal to the high-priest of Lamaism, the Dalai Lama of Lhassa.

When the Moro-Naba dies, according to tradition his successor can be either one of his sons or one of his brothers. Customary right has not fixed definitely which of the sons or brothers has to occupy the empty throne of the Mossi ruler, and so before the conquest of the country by the French, after the death of a Moro-Naba there followed a period of increasing intrigues and armed conflicts between the claimants.

The dead king, attired in ceremonial robes and furnished with the symbols of his majesty, lies in state for two or three days in the throne hall, where the members of his family and the princes may behold him. On the fourth day the body of the deceased is washed, wrapped

in the freshly flayed skin of a bull, and awaits interment, the time of which is appointed by the priest of Earth, and the head of the Minissis clan, once subdued by the ancestors of the deceased. The dignitaries let the body into the earth, with the face towards the east. The Mossis prepare the tomb of their ruler either somewhere in a "sacred" spot or in a separate hut-mausoleum in the grounds of the palace.

From the time of the king's death until the selection of his successor the palace remains shut up and closely guarded by soldiers, so that the widows of the king shall not escape. That would be an evil omen for the new Moro-Naba. But it seems that political considerations have much greater significance than omens, for the king's wives are drawn from all the princely families, so that these conjugal bonds sustain good relations with sometimes powerful vassals. The entire property of the deceased, including his widows, passes into the possession of the new king, and so he inherits assured and firmly established diplomatic relationships.

The king is buried. The sacrifices have been made over the fresh grave. The authority passes to Tapsoba, the minister for war. But he summons a council of ministers and palace dignitaries, asking for the selection of a new ruler for the country and a chief commander of the army. From this moment all the claimants don special insignia: a sword, a bow, a spear, and a sheepskin thrown across the shoulder.

When selecting the new king the supreme council holds a secret session, sometimes even away from the capital, somewhere in the jungle or in a lonely village.

This they do in order to avoid intrigues or even an armed attack on the part of the impatient rivals who are aspiring to the throne. In the council participate the minister for war, Tapsoba-Naba, the commander of the cavalry, Uidi-Naba, and the priest of Earth, Gunga-Naba—all three have deciding votes; an advisory voice is possessed by the minister of the royal tombs, the chief of the eunuchs, the chief intendant of the palace, the minister of the palace gates, the chief of the diviners, magicians and fetish-makers, and also the elders of the most ancient autochthons, the Minissises. The council discusses the recommendations and services of the candidates to the throne, and when the choice is made the dignitaries return, also secretly, to the palace.

Then the supreme council sends a courier for the selected candidate; and he, preserving the secrecy and taking precautionary measures to avoid being killed or poisoned on the road, presents himself at night before the dignitaries, who take from him the insignia of a candidate and hand him a pair of white boots, a white fur hat and a cushion. After this introductory ceremony, accompanied by the chief of the "griots" Uidi-Naba enters the hall where all the dignitaries, chiefs and princes are already gathered, and proclaims the name of the new king, after which he ushers him in, saying:

"Behold him who is to be the lord of our life and death!"

Immediately music begins to play, the "griots" sing, and male and female dancers organize a great tam-tam. The ministers and princes press the hand of the new

Moro-Naba, wishing him a happy reign. This is the last handshake the king will receive in life. From that moment he, the ruler and demi-god, possessing the miraculous fetishes of the entire dynasty, will receive obeisances to the ground and other marks of reverence.

That night the king hears his true name, given him by his parents and the priest of Earth, for the last time. He loses it for ever; and together with him all his namesakes lose theirs, adopting from this time the title "nabiuri," which means "bearing the name of the king." Next morning the new Moro-Naba gives the assembled throng three names from which to select, and one of them becomes the name of the king. The Moro-Naba now ruling was named Saidu-Congo before he embraced regal power, but his royal name is Naba-Kom, the ruler of water.

The king betakes himself to the tomb of his ancestors, and after offering sacrifices he receives the oath of fealty from his vassal princes and from the minister for war, who declares that the army will always stand by the side of their commander-in-chief, Moro-Naba. The dignitaries then conduct the king back to the palace, where he enters into the possession of the inheritance left by his predecessor: the land, jewels, houses, wives, horses, arms, herds, reserves of provisions, slaves and servants.[3]

This concludes the Moro-Naba's initiatory ceremonies. From the following day he begins to govern the country as king and as supreme priest. In his person science may find proofs of the evolution of royal authority.

[3] A similar ceremonial is adopted at the selection of vassal princes, but with less pomp and solemnity.

His ancestor Riaré, possessing unusually miracle-working fetishes and amulets, became famous as a magician throughout the kingdom of Tenkodogo. In the course of time the magicians recognized the possessor of these fetishes as their leader; and so did the priests of Earth of all the provinces and villages as well as the palace priests. Then one of the descendants of Riaré became high-priest of Earth, until the moment came when Ubri, retaining for himself the priestly authority, simultaneously became king.

In his *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship,* when adducing proofs of the evolution of authority from the wand of the magician to the crown and purple of the monarch, Professor J. G. Frazer makes no mention whatever of the Mossi people, where perhaps the genesis of regal authority is more distinctly indicated than anywhere else.

Once every year, on the holy day "basgha," the Negro All Souls' Day, Moro-Naba remembers his ancestors and makes abundant offerings over their graves.

Kom: Moro-Naba XXXII gave us an audience in his palace. In the fiery noon of March 11, 1926, we drove with the governor in motor-cars to the palace of the king. All the gates were wide open. At the gates we were met by the palace intendant, Balum-Naba, the chief of the bodyguard, Samandi-Naba, and the director of the royal tam-tam, Bindi-Naba, surrounded by a crowd of servants, "griots," slaves and gaping loafers. We drove into a spacious courtyard and stopped before the open verandah of Moro-Naba's one-storied brick palace. On the verandah some three hundred people were as-

sembled around the magnificent figure of the Mossi ruler.

Excessively corpulent, forty-five-year-old Moro-Naba, with his clean-shaven, majestic face, and prominent thick lips, black skin and a tranquil expression in his yellowish-brown, rather muddy eyes, was wearing a broad and long purple velvet cloak, with a violet cap embroidered in gold on his powerful head. He approached the steps of the verandah, welcoming us with an expressive dignified motion of the hand.

Surrounded by a crowd of princes, ministers, palace dignitaries, eunuchs, "griots," priests and the nondescript throng that customarily browses in the palaces of ruling persons, we followed the king, who conducted us to the throne hall. The king took his seat on the steps of the throne, and chairs were brought for us.

The royal suite took up their places according to the prescriptions of court etiquette. The ministers and palace dignitaries, dressed in colourful velvet jackets embroidered with gold and silver, sat down on the floor close to Moro-Naba. I observed that Balum-Naba was at the head of the dignitaries, probably in order to act as an interpreter, for he spoke French fluently. When the last "griots" and musicians had arranged themselves in the depths of the hall—void, dusky, with windows open to the verandah—silence fell.

The entire throng began to make to the monarch a ceremonial obeisance, called "pussi." Seating themselves, the subjects rested their elbows on the ground, and, bending low, struck the pavement thrice with their fists, their thumbs raised. The "pussi" was repeated

three times, during which the king rubbed one palm against the other with a slow movement, which meant to signify his favour and desire for peace to the state and the people.

After this welcome a "pussi" in honour of M. Hesling followed. The governor made a short speech, summoning the Mossi people to intensified labour in the fields and to an extension of the cotton cultivation which would assure the people's welfare; then he announced that the government of France, appreciating the loyal and peaceful policy of Moro-Naba, had appointed him an officer of the Legion of Honour, the insignia of which the representative of the French government now handed him, together with his deed of investiture.

Moro-Naba, who spoke a little French, understood the governor's speech perfectly, yet not a muscle quivered on his face; and when accepting the decoration and document he uttered not a word. For Moro-Naba is a demi-god, and so gratitude, gladness, satisfaction, and the cares and despairs of mortals are unknown to him. However, the whole court expressed their thanks to the governor in the name of the ruler by making him a new "pussi."

Young lads then began to carry around "dolo," a frothing millet-beer, and falling to their knees before the king and his guests, handed them glasses of the beverage.

While drinking the flavourous, refreshing liquor, I gazed around the throne hall. The walls, built of unbaked brick, were of a dark grey, sombre colour. Several portraits of French generals from *Illustration* adorned

the hall. The throne consisted of a low dais of three steps, covered with native woollen homespun of a delicate design, and also a chair the arms of which were covered with red velvet. The king sat on the top step of the throne, having as his support his emblem of authority, the leather cushion, which was covered with beautiful embroidery work.

Among the crowd of courtiers I noticed not a single woman. I was informed that Moro-Naba avoids presenting his women-folk to Europeans, for seemingly they consist of a good hundred ancient and ugly females; matrimonial alliances are usually concluded for political purposes, so the beauty of the betrothed plays no part whatever in the arrangement.

However, I observed another circumstance. At the feet of the ruler, in an extremely graceful attitude, sat a youth in woman's attire, with hair combed and frisured like a woman's; his eyes were heavily painted with dark-blue paint and his lips were carmined; on his arms and legs were bracelets; around his neck were jewels. Several similar youths were standing somewhat to the side behind the throne.

Administrator Michel, who was sitting by me, leaned across and explained into my ear: "You see those youngsters? They are 'soronis,' Moro-Naba's pages, who never leave him, day or night. These youths are not allowed to look at women or to have wives. They must live in innocence until they cease to be 'soronis.' That happens when the king hands the page trousers and simultaneously assigns him a wife, selecting her from among the 'pongsiuris,' or the first-born daughters of

each of the former pages who has his own family, the first-born daughter always belonging to the king." [4]

Once every year the chief of the magicians and diviners, Pui-Naba, verifies the innocence of the pages, giving them a vessel of water and commanding them to look at themselves in it. The test takes place in the presence of the king himself; and woe to the "soroni" if he be guilty, betraying by the expression of his face his secret alarm. Then usually he is subjected to a serious operation and is reckoned among the order of "zusoba," or eunuchs. The function of the eunuchs is to accompany the wives of the king when they journey to the houses of their families for child-birth, to educate the royal children outside the royal court until they are ten years old, and to defend the virtue of the wives and the "soronis" residing in the palace.

It has sometimes happened that too amorous a page who enjoyed the particular favour of Moro-Naba has paid for his offence with his life. In such a case the angry king commands the hair to be shaved from the "soroni's" beautifully and girlishly coiffured head and gives him into the hands of the Pui-Naba. The latter knows in advance what he has to do, and he places the youth in a small, dark cell and sends him to sleep for ever by burning aromatic but poisonous herbs.

Now that the cultured representative of France has his seat in Waghadugu these customs are naturally either kept in the deepest secret or are subjected to fundamental changes in procedure. In any case an unfaith-

[4] The first son of a former page also belongs to Moro-Naba, and becomes one of his "soronis."

ful wife or a guilty "soroni" can, if they are able, obtain the protection and aid of the French law. But I think that so far there have been no cases of this happening in actual colonial practice, for the traditions and customary laws of the natives still have an irresistible charm for them.

The "soroni" sitting at the feet of the ruler himself handed the king "dolo," [5] first moistening his own lips with it. Unquestionably this was the same custom as existed in the courts of ruling kings in Europe even in the eighteenth century, and served to demonstrate that the drink was not poisoned. When Moro-Naba drank, sneezed, coughed, or began to speak, the entire entourage discreetly clapped their hands and rubbed their palms in sign of their good wishes.

Finally the beer was all consumed. Moro-Naba rose, and went again to the verandah. The balaphones, fifes and violins played, songs arose. The king commanded his mounts to be shown to us—a different colour for every day and week. They were beautiful stallions, thoroughbred "Liptako" horses,[6] with powerful, broad hoofs, admirably adapted for swift running over the deep sands common in the north-east parts of Upper Volta, where the Sahara flings them across the Niger. The rich saddle-cloths, silver bridles and stirrups, Arab saddles with a broad seat and a high pommel mounted with silver, a mass of pearl, and coral, former French generals' saddles presented to the king by the colonial

[5] Also called "dam."

[6] Liptako is part of the province of Dori, adjacent to the Sudan and French Nigeria. It is a country with the distinguishing features of a desert.

authorities, beaten and engraved brazen and silver helmets, plumes, varicoloured nets and embroidered girths constituted a beautiful, original picture, calling for the canvas of a battle-painter. We had no painter with us, but our kinematographic and photographic cameras rattled and shot continually.

At last we took our leave of the friendly Mossi ruler and drove away.

"But we have given a good deal of trouble to the stout, readily perspiring Moro-Naba!" I exclaimed when we were outside the palace gates.

"That doesn't matter," M. Hesling answered. "Without doubt Moro-Naba is gratified, for he is terribly bored in his palace."

"Has he no diversion whatever?" I asked.

"Certainly he has," the governor answered, "but I don't think that such diversions can satisfy even his unfastidious taste and demands on life. 'Dolo,' ministers, 'soronis,' 'griots,' and tam-tams—that must be all! He never leaves his palace, except on Fridays."

"Never leaves his palace!" I exclaimed.

"Such is the tradition! Its beginning dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century," M. Hesling explained.

"Please tell us about it," I asked the governor.

"It was like this," he answered. "One of the previous Moro-Nabas had a wife who continually wept and asked her consort to allow her to visit her family, who lived in the distant settlement of La. But the king would not agree; possibly he loved her, or possibly he had no great trust in her virtue. It ended with the wife fleeing

from the palace; she smuggled herself right through Waghadugu, which was surrounded by a permanent cordon of royal foot soldiers, and disappeared into the bush. Moro-Naba decided to chase the fugitive in person, ordered a horse to be brought, and was already setting out in pursuit, when at the gate a crowd of dignitaries barred his road. In the name of all the people and the army the minister for war besought the king to abandon his intention, for if the ruler were to leave the capital anarchy would immediately break out. Moro-Naba yielded, and thus bound the hearts of the people to himself, since he had proved that for their good he was ready to sacrifice his own happiness and peace. The wife, learning of the nobility of her consort, returned voluntarily, and shortly afterwards bare him two sons. In memory of this historical fact, every day, after awakening, having an early breakfast and finishing his toilet, at seven o'clock in the morning Moro-Naba attires himself in his royal robes and goes into the hall, where he is welcomed by his wives and personal suite, then goes on to the verandah. Servants lead a saddled horse to him and the king touches the stirrup with his foot. But after a moment he takes his seat in a special spot by the doors and is given a "pussi" by the ministers, the dignitaries and the princes present at the court. This audience is brief, for Moro-Naba returns to his apartments, changes his attire and only then begins to govern his subjects, issuing commands touching his personal and the palace affairs, listening to reports, giving audience to petitioners and guests and holding courts. About eleven o'clock the king has break-

fast, which is prepared for him by his wives and 'soronis'; he rests till two o'clock, and then again receives ministers and petitioners. At sunset Balum-Naba and Zusoba-Naba, the chief eunuch, appear, and make offerings of water at the palace doors, where the dynastic 'gre-gres' are hidden. This is a very solemn moment. No one in even the most distant corner of the palace would dare to stir or speak, and no one has the right to pass close to the dignitaries standing in the presence of the mysterious, powerful 'gre-gres.' When the sacrificial rites are ended the servants light the lamps, Moro-Naba has his evening meal and then retires to rest."

"So this prisoner of etiquette never leaves the palace?" I exclaimed, sincerely lamenting over the fate of Moro-Naba.

"Very, very rarely, at all events," M. Hesling answered. "On Friday the king pays visits either to me or to the administrator; two or three times a year he takes part in the sacrifices in the sacred groves close to Waghadugu—that is all. Only this year has Moro-Naba ridden further, to welcome the governor-general —to the great terror of the dignitaries and the people. But nothing happened in the Mossi country . . . so perhaps Moro-Naba will break a little from this age-old, absolutely unbearable etiquette after that test. . . ."

"Poor, wretched Moro-Naba!" I thought. "'Dolo' and incarceration by palace traditions: how could one avoid getting fat? It is strange that history makes no mention of Mossi rulers going mad with boredom."

Their only diversion, and that full of anxiety, is perhaps the annual ceremony of testing the fidelity of the

ruler's very numerous wives. This is carried out with Pui-Naba's assistance in the same manner as the testing of the "soroni's" innocence. However, in the event of a woman being guilty the consequences are far more terrible, for the law recognizes only the punishment of death for unfaithful and treacherous royal consorts.

The person of Moro-Naba's is invested with a spell of absolute earthly and religious-magical authority, which has the effect of maintaining the stability and power of the State. He is the personification of the immortality of the Ubri dynasty, and of the existence of the Mossi State unbroken by any internal or external circumstance. Moro-Naba can transfer part of his sovereign rights to the ministers, dignitaries, and vassal princes, but this is an expression of the monarch's favour, a supreme honour, the loss of which constitutes an act of disgrace. The man endowed with the royal confidence endeavours to be worthy of it until death. For this reason punishment by deprivation of privileges conferred by the monarch does not exist at all in the Mossi traditional law. The dignitary who has abused his rights pays the penalty of death.

Moro-Naba possesses absolute authority and influence not because he is a religious leader, the chief priest, but because he comes of ancestors reigning in ancient times and is surrounded with the external insignia of his origin and rank. Only during a few annual public festivals do the people see the king in the rôle of high-priest, and at the same time every family conducts independent devotions and offers its own sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors and spirits surrounding living

beings. Such a condition of things makes of the king merely a traditional, nominal high-priest, recognized only by the people of the palace, the tenants of his private estates, and by his kinsmen, the indirent descendants of the Ubri dynasty.

However, in addition to the historical prestige which emanates from the person of the representative of an ancient dynasty, so far as I could gather Moro-Naba possesses unlimited magical influence, as a magician surrounded with the power and aid of the miraculous "gregres" of distant ancestors. In the presence of the monarch no one can speak an untruth, for the "gregre," the legendary hunter Riaré, prevents it; poison loses its power when the gate of the king falls on it; the woman whom Moro-Naba gives even a fleeting glance, becomes fertile; the drinking of water touched by the lips of the ruler confers health. These beliefs all demonstrate the magical influence of the king-magician and priest.

I attentively studied the features of this ruler in Waghadugu as he was listening to the new governor; and at our parting he gave my wife a very beautiful cushion and the violin of his palace "griot."

But everything in Africa between the tropics and the equator has its shadow, and that shadow is always a natural or an artificial contrast.

The almighty sun, the divinity of all the people of the earth, is here a hostile power from which even the supreme heavenly being has hidden himself away, somewhere far above the flaming star, where a refreshing twilight reigns. The sun forces part of the human soul

to leave the living body in the form of a dark shadow. The sun kills the nurturing jungle and drinks up the life-giving water, takes from people their strength to labour, changes the earth into a stone, gives birth to poisonous insects, and scatters the seeds of unknown diseases.

What contrasts strike you at every step in Waghadugu! Moro-Naba's palace, with its etiquette lasting over seven hundred years, and the church and monastery of the "White Fathers" not far from it; the weaving workshops where the nuns teach the Negro children beautiful artistic work; the hospital where the doctors overcome the murderous influence of the sun and the diseases brought here by the former conquistadores; the schools where expert and intelligent teachers bring the black Mossis step by step closer to an understanding of the thought of the white people, and where among the pupils I was shown a daughter of Moro-Naba who dreams of a journey to Dakar, in order to be trained as a midwife and to bring aid to the women of her tribe. Where now stands the Catholic church, only recently a sacred grove murmured, and within it the king made offerings on the day of the Tensi festival.

Only to think that side by side exist such phenomena as the absolute monarch Moro-Naba and the democratic representative of republican France; the amazing institution of woman-impersonating page "soronis" and the devout and gentle missionary sisters; a chief of eunuchs and chief magician, and by their side the reverend, bearded Catholic monk; dynastic "gre-gres" hidden in the palace and a simple crucifix above the great altar of the

church; the traditional inactivity of the king and the feverish labour in the cotton warehouses, in the motor-garages, in the electric power station which lights the town in the artificial ice factory, in the shops and the governmental and private offices!

When the motor-car halted before our house and I was left alone in my room, through my mind slipped a skein of tangled thoughts, disordered and confused by the paradoxical nature of the contrasts I had witnessed. Only a couple of hours later when talking with M. Michel and his family, who are all well acquainted with local conditions, did I gradually reduce my heterogeneous impressions to some order.

Night had fallen and Waghadugu was sunk in silence. Only rarely through the girdle of trees surrounding the administrator's house floated to us the echoing footsteps of Negroes wandering aimlessly, the distant barking of dogs, and the hooting of motor-cars approaching the town from the direction of Bobo-Diulasso. On the horizon the sky trembled with the moon rising slowly higher and higher above the flaming bush.

The administrator told us the history of the French troops which made their way from the north at the time of the occupation of the Sudan. Mme. Michel bustled around at the table; their young, comely, active daughter, a fine sportswoman who worked in her father's office as secretary and interpreter, recited some Mossi songs to my wife. While waiting, M. Delavignette worked at a rhymed French version of the native poetry. The bats and night birds rustled, two young lions lazily stretched themselves and noisily grumbled under the table. . . .

My wife began to play some old-time French melodies on the violin. . . . We all lapsed into silence. . . . My thoughts flew back across the centuries, when the lonely queen of the Gold Coast had made her way into the dangerous, savage jungle, and following the call of her heart found for herself a husband—the valiant Riaré, who in token of his prowess as an elephant-hunter wore a helmet of a white calabash adorned with a garland of cors and a horse-tail.

These two beings did not know then that the family they founded would outlast the centuries, and that long after, when we should come to cross the jungle, their descendant, attired in the regal purple, would be faithfully preserving their memory, their amulets and the powerful "gre-gres," the fetishes of an everlasting dynasty.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE WHITE WAVE

SOME years ago I saw a large lake, banked by the mysterious earth of Asia—soil saturated with the blood and pregnant with the dust of peoples wandering towards the west. Out of the troubled yellow waves emerged a little island, still crowned with the ruins of walls, several naked trees and the remains of fortified bastions. Suddenly a gale arose and lashed the lake with its merciless whip until it was covered with white foam, and possessed with a frenzy of revolt, began to throw up ranks of seething billows, tossing and boiling in the struggle with the tyrant of the air. The wind lashed again and again, and each time more powerfully and cruelly. Then in impotent rage or possibly in despair, the waves suddenly withdrew; and with a menacing roar, with a broken bellow, with a memorable splash of waters, they fastened their thousands of white teeth in the low bank of the solitary fragment of earth, began with yellow, ravening tongues to lick the tottering walls, the mouldering bastions and the fusty trees until they crumbled down, and torn away by the boiling whirlpool, opened a road to the waves.

These now-fading pictures emerged again out of a

mist of memories as I listened to stories telling the fates of the descendants of the hunter Riaré; of the just god Ammo-Uendi; of the monstrous, mouldering yet powerful fetishes which retain the invisible traces of supplicatory eyes burning with faith and hope—the eyes of dozens of generations of Mossis; of the mysterious white slave who, with a cross—the token of death's victory—brought death to the family of the high-born descendants of Ubri.

Over the background of these pictures of the past and the present moved an unknown hand, and with its every touch new spots emerged on the darkened, misty surface —spots vivid, brilliant, often glaring, almost painful: patches of arrogant contrasts. As the agitated billows of the distant lake destroyed the remains of the former fortress of the Chinese invaders, so the waves of the intrepid and persistent white race beat on the bank and into the heart of the black continent, tearing down before them the old prejudices and customs, and on their ruins erecting new phantasmic buildings, roads, fields, plantations and laws.

I thought of these things as I sat one day in M. Hesling's motor-car. We were riding along a beautiful road lined with pseudo-mahogany trees which traversed the principality of Kaya. The governor was talking to the administrator Michel about new bridges and cotton warehouses, but my thoughts were far away in the obscure twilight of the centuries and in the still darker mists of the future.

Would the white waves completely break down the fortified walls and bastions of the simple, mournful faith

of these primitive people—as had happened with the low island emerging from the foaming, yellow lake—and then pass on, carrying extermination with them? On arriving at the opposite bank, would those waves bring only destruction, or in their eddies do they preserve the fruitful seeds of a new life, and will they accomplish a mighty sowing which will transform the desert into dark forests, into colourful, joyous, flower-covered meadows, or into golden, fertile fields?

But meanwhile our motor-car speeds on, passing by bare, enormous baobabs and the villages of the simple-souled natives, fettered in the red-hot chain of the sun-tyrant, toiling painfully and laboriously on the cotton-fields under the lash of millions of flaming whips.

Driving around a bridge, the wheels of the car bounce on the round stones in the dry bed of the White Volta. We notice three natives discussing something, waving their arms and gazing fearfully at the jungle. In their hands they hold bows and they have terrified faces. The car stops and the governor asks the cause of their disquiet. The natives all begin to speak together:

"Two lions are wandering in the jungle. Yesterday they came out on the road and attacked travellers. They have carried off two sheep from the village of Korsimoro. . . . They are old lions. . . . They no longer have any strength or speed to chase the antelope in the bush, so they fall on the most defenceless and submissive of victims . . . men and domestic animals. We want to hunt the lions, but we are afraid. There are only a few of us . . . only three could go . . . for the others are busy carrying cotton to the warehouses at Korsimoro."

The governor promises a large reward for the killing of the lion. We speed on.

The village of Korsimoro—a large, prosperous village with a spacious square in the centre. A crowd of natives carrying baskets of cotton fills the square. Several European merchants are dividing among themselves the whole of the cotton brought here, and crowd around the scales controlled by the colonial officials or pay the natives the money due to them. The administrator of Kaya comes to meet the governor. He is a former officer, a giant with a martial face, and rejoicing in the name Bourrouillou, which recalls the echoes of distant thunder. At his side majestically strides the vassal prince of Kaya, Busuma-Naba.

We pass through the market and look at the cotton; the governor checks the Europeans' and Syrians' contracts with the Negro planters, also the weights and the quality of the goods. He talks with the more important planters, gives instructions to the administrator and his assistant, listens to the merchants, and makes an examination of the tractors which have to carry the cotton bought from the natives to the railway to Buke. After we have made our survey of the market and the warehouses, the administrator and his wife give us breakfast in the spacious hut of the local headman. Preserved foods, a chicken *à la* Uoloff,[1] roast wild guinea-fowls, sweet potatoes, cheese, red wine and champagne and best of all ice specially supplied from Waghadugu and very good fresh water from a deep well.

[1] The Negroes of the Uoloff tribe serve the chicken in a mess of pea-nuts, oil and red pepper.

We went into the square. Opposite the headman's hut the prince Busuma-Naba had sat down surrounded by his suite; behind him gathered a crowd of the village inhabitants and planters with their families and slaves come to market. Among the crowd of short-haired natives I observed men with quite cleverly arranged frisures and unusual scorings on the face. It was explained to me that these were the marks of the aristocrats, "nakompsas," to distinguish them from the populace. Meanwhile the prince's suite and his immediate entourage made him a "pussi" obeisance. Then Busuma-Naba invited the governor to an entertainment. This was a "Fantasia" already known to me from my journey through Morocco and Nigeria.

We went to a spacious plain immediately outside the village and took our places. Besuma-Naba, attired in a conical broad hat plaited of duduma [2] and a white burnous with a green scarf around his waist and red boots with large spurs once worn by conquistadores on his feet, gave a signal. A fiery chestnut stallion furnished with a handsome saddle-cloth, a saddle glittering with scarlet and silver, and a broad forged helmet and blinkers, was led to him. At the back, half-way down his tail, hung a belt of leather richly embroidered with gold. From the straps of the bridle and from the helmet hung plumes of feathers and hair.

The prince leapt lightly into the saddle and slipped his feet into broad Mauritanian stirrups. The suite, the ministers, eunuchs, "nakompsas" and equerries followed his

[2] Duduma is a long grass which provides perfect material for basket-work.

example. Boys handed them arms. They consisted of swords with cross-shaped, Turkish and Arabian hilts and scabbards of leather, silver and velvet, solid iron spears with broad points, finely engraved javelins mounted with silver, and bows with quivers full of arrows.

Led by the prince, the riders rode to the end of the broad plain, and turning their horses, defiled past at a sharp gallop. The fiery stallions snorted and neighed, fretted in their course, or reared and jumped frenziedly. Behind the two hundred horsemen sped a golden dust-cloud, and a heavy wave of clamorous war-drums mingled with the deep tones of balaphones. The riders returned, and Busuma raised his sword above his head. The drums died away, nevertheless the fifes screamed piercingly and disquietingly, and the high notes of the balaphones fled liltingly. With shouts and howls the serried, seething ranks of riders pounded past, throwing up the glittering blades of their broadswords and catching the poles of their javelins in the air. All were mingled in a tempest of horses' and human bodies. Commonly a slave-equerry who was an ardent rider would out-distance the prince, a eunuch raced with a proud "nakompsa," Busuma-Naba pursued and overtook a strange shield-bearer. . . .

Suddenly the band grew savage, as though transformed into a horde of malignant, invincible jinn spirits; they galloped past us and immediately disappeared, enveloped in billows of dry, yellow earth torn away and pounded into dust by the powerful hoofs of the foam-covered, heated stallions. But the heavy streams of sunlight oozing down from the pallid, almost white-

hot heaven quickly beat the dust to the ground. Again the serried horde of horses and men emerged and passed at a sharp gallop. From time to time the riders stripped the eager, passionate stallions, while they madly tossed their heads and cast foam from their lips as they champed the bit. They were little horses of the Yagha breed, with small, unusually hard hoofs, which cannot be bettered for stony ground.

Prince Busuma-Naba leapt from his horse, handing the reins and his sword to the boy holding his stirrup. We expressed our thanks to the prince and the elders, took our leave of the officials, and soon we had sped back to Waghadugu in our car.

I spent barely a day in the capital of the French governor and the king of the Mossi people, and then drove with M. Hesling to Sarya, where the French authorities had established an experimental agricultural station. Its purpose was the investigation of the conditions most suitable for cotton cultivation on the dry field system, and the instruction of the natives in new methods of agriculture, the employment of oxen with American ploughs, the application of modern agriculture implements, and economical husbandry.

The young "nakompsas" and sons of the more opulent villagers come to Sarya, being sent here for study, together with draught cattle by the Mossi princes. After passing through the practical school the youngsters return to their homes, and thus the province obtains quite well-qualified instructors, oxen taught to work in harness, and ploughs, which are offered as a kind of reward by the administration.

Here I again realized the dimensions of an effort which is worthy of the highest appreciation. Two years ago the virgin jungle flourished in the place where this farm-school now stands. Now Sarya possesses one hundred acres of excellent fields, where instead of 72 lb. of cotton 630 lb. are being harvested per acre, and by improving the native cotton through selection it is planned to raise it to from 900 to 1,100 lb. In addition to cotton, the farm produces millet, arachides, tobacco and maize; and in a muddy depression and on its surrounding banks I saw rice-fields, a vegetable garden with beds of perfect cucumbers and tomatoes, and also fields of wheat. Here and there I observed rows of agava cacti and an undergrowth of bamboos.

The fine bulls have fodder prepared for them, stored in great ricks which are built on platforms raised on posts, so that rats, mice and termites cannot destroy the fodder.

The dried-up bed of a small stream passes through Sarya. During the rainy season the rivulet becomes a river and inundates a large expanse of low-lying fields. Then crocodiles make their appearance. They do not all succeed in getting away from the river before the dry season, so they hide themselves where they can, to await better times.

The director of the farm, M. W. A. Petrov, a former officer of the Russian Guard and now a diploma'd French agriculturist, told us of the habits of these reptiles and of an unusual manner of hunting after them adopted in the dry season. The crocodiles hide in warrens dug out of the banks of the stream, the old ones

sleeping nearest to the entrance, where there is more air, and the younger crocodiles farther in. When the hunting is to take place the natives light a fire or burn some sulphur before the entrance to the warren, driving the smoke into it. The old crocodiles immediately flee farther into the warren, trampling on and suffocating the little ones, but never emerging to the surface of the earth. After a certain time the Negroes dig up the warren and draw out their capture.

When we returned home a pleasant surprise was awaiting me. I received an invitation to the annual hunt of the Mossi people. The governor forewarned us that we could not expect a plentiful bag, but he assured us that we should experience sensations beyond all measure, and that our cameras also would not be idle. This did not discourage us in the least; for we had not come to western Africa to shed blood, but to get to know the people, the nature, the unknown gods, and all that which constitutes life and makes it beautiful in this land of inscrutable yearning and inexpressible joy.

There were two leaders at the head of our expedition. One was the strategist: this being Balum-Naba; the other the chief manager: the energetic, jovial administrator Michel. By a road which runs to the frontier of the British Gold Coast Colony we travelled in cars and on horseback as far as the banks of the Red Volta. As we drove we observed a great animation in the villages and on the road and the paths winding through the bush. Small and large divisions of black hunters were streaming from all directions. Bowmen loaded with hunters' amulets and with quivers full of poisoned

arrows marched along, leading on leashes small dogs resembling English greyhounds, which minced right under the feet of their masters.

Every little division, as it made its way to a spot previously assigned to it, had its musician playing on a flute made of bamboo or a burnt-out, hollow piece of mahogany. Some of them were trumpeting on hunters' horns, which produced muffled, sombre tones. Here and there we met with horsemen, singly or surrounded sometimes by a numerous suite, armed with bows, spears, swords, and old flint-guns with long, heavy barrels. The rich "kamberes" and "nakompsas" rode on handsome horses and carried good hunters' rifles or even carbines.

We halted in a camp prepared for us. It was an entire village of barracks, made mostly of bamboos and straw mats stuck together. The population of this village, which had arisen in the heart of the jungle at the energetic Miches' command, numbered five hundred people; for besides ourselves and several other European guests, Balum-Naba, Gunga-Naba and three princes with their "soronis," their suites and their guards were also accommodated here. It would have been possible to hunt all day under European conditions, sitting in our shelters, for every moment doves and wild green pigeons flew over the camp, while again and again the dogs startled partridges, guinea-fowl and rock hens in the bushes.

We stayed several days in this camp, spending very many pleasant moments; for after a fatiguing wandering through the jungle we would gather before sunset in a large shed, and sit down at a table abundantly furnished by administrator Michel with not only various

tasty dishes and excellent wine, but even with ice brought daily by car from Waghadugu. Here in the jungle glasses frequently clinked and shouts thundered out in honour of our homeland.

The Negro hunts are carried on in a manner common to all the African tribes. The divisions of common archers receive their orders in the evening and set out at night, surrounding a large area of the bush. At dawn all the divisions begin to move towards the centre, forming an unbroken chain as they approach one another. However, the Mossi trackers are so clever at hiding themselves or moving without the least rustle that I would frequently be quite close to the black archers, and yet be unable to distinguish one of them on the greyish-yellow ground of the dry grass and burnt bushes.

In these hunts extraordinary scenes are frequently to be observed. The ring of archers has already surrounded the jungle. The elders, armed with firearms, have taken up their chosen position. The tracker leading the noiselessly advancing beaters has crawled like a snake to the centre of the circle, has snuffed, taken note of everything, read every track on the dry earth, and understood the meaning of every nibbled branch, broken bark, or spot on a stone.

From the height of an elevation the completely encircled jungle lies as though on one's palm. With heart beating violently one may observe how the antelopes drive out of the bush, frightened not by a noise, but rather by the lurking silence, a hidden menace hanging in the air. The ruddy and dark-grey animals run out

before us and flee past, light in their race, confident in the strength of their springy legs, realizing the proximity of fresh, safer undergrowth. Suddenly their flying nostrils are dilated—in the current of air pressing against their breasts they have caught a strange scent coming from quite near at hand. Another leap, and directly behind a bush rises the form of an archer tautened to the tension of the bow. In the twinkling of an eye the terrified but vigilant and cautious animal makes a lightning-like, inapprehensible zigzag and disappears to the right; but again there comes to him that same alarming scent. The antelope stands as though rooted to the ground, snuffs, gazes and listens. . . . With a protracted whistle a poisoned arrow buries itself in him, or a carbine rattles.

A little farther on, pressing their spotted bodies to the ground like snakes, creep the rapacious lynx and civet. Sometimes they disappear from sight, for they have hidden in a bunch of high grass. One has to fix the gaze long on every stone, every burnt branch or mouldering stump in order to distinguish, or rather to guess the animals. One only succeeds in discerning them when their yellow orbs, burning with terror and frenzy, glitter in the sunlight.

A little glade amid the grass. . . . They smuggle themselves through it like phantoms. . . . They slip into the undergrowth of palm bushes and suddenly flatten themselves to the earth, for they see a man. Not removing their straining gaze from him, they crawl towards the high grass, unaware that there too stand naked black men, that they have raised their spears

and are already waiting for them. . . . They creep up to it, and . . . immediately several broad points transfix the lynx to the earth. With a violent cast of the body, lashing his tail, the civet flings himself back into the glade, but falls struck by coarse small-shot.

Suddenly the tracker's horn sounds with a warning bellow; the beaters hidden behind the bushes look around, listen, and cautiously finger their amulets. After a moment they begin to withdraw, retiring to right and left as though opening a broad and free passage to someone powerful.

Sometimes it really is a powerful lord, the maneless lion, as tawny as the sands of the desert—the ruler and the terror of the jungle. The men have disturbed him in his royal lair, so he has raised his head and long listened and gazed around him. He has conjectured what is happening in his possessions, has realized that his eternal enemy, man, has invaded the jungle to sow destruction; for now somewhere afar an arrow has twanged, then another, and a startled antelope has fled by without even observing him before whom all have trembled. . . .

Setting back his ears and slightly showing his fangs, the lion makes off in the opposite direction. The ranks of hunters armed only with bows and javelins open before him; he gazes around once more and with great leaps jumps across the stones and low bushes, until he vanishes somewhere in the bush on the muddy bank, emerges from it after a moment, wades the river and flees on and on, breathing stentoriously.

A drove of monkeys, jumping and nervously chatter-

ing, run to a high tree and clamber to its very summit. The ring of archers straitens more and more. Now it is no longer one ring, but two, then three, and finally four. In the little space surrounded by the crowd of men the antelopes and smaller beasts of prey dart about hemmed in on all sides, and fall under the blows of spears and heavy sticks. With a rustle of wings and startled cries, partridges, bustards, Pharaoh's chickens, guinea-fowl, and quails momently start up; but struck with sticks and the poles of spears they fall into the grass, never to rise again. There are left only the monkeys, lurking on the bare boughs of the mighty, ancient tree. The ministers, princes, "nakompsas," and grey-haired headmen possessing fire-arms approach it. The shots thunder out. The jungle is hidden beneath the smoke, as though hiding its features before the sight of the revolting slaughter. The dead monkeys fall from the tree, striking heavily against the hard earth; the wounded cling awkwardly to the branches, and straining their bodies endeavour to clamber still higher; but the fire-arms emit their volleys and strike them to the ground.

Soon only the dead bodies of animals and birds remain in the baking, mournful clearing. The hunters divide the spoils according to established tradition, and cut out the livers and hearts of the animals on the spot, bake them at a fire and devour them gladly, avidly, immoderately. Fresh crowds now arrive with a shout. They are the women, the wives and daughters who have followed the hunters. They carry baskets on their heads and broad machetas in their hands. When the division

of the spoil is finished they depart, carrying the baskets filled with meat and skins, and dripping with blood. . . .

The Mossi villages possess many fowl, sheep, goats, and bullocks, so the inhabitants can always have meat. The field of millet and cotton also supply them, for they swarm with hares and partridges. Then, why this drive after meat during the hunt—an impulse irresistible, and so powerful that the natives eat everything that falls before the arrow or under the blow of macheta or stick? After the hunt I saw the livers of antelopes, tigers, cats, civets and hares baking and smoking on the coals of the fire.

Perhaps it is some influence of the sun on the black man's organism, which at certain periods needs an excessive meat diet? Perhaps in this devouring of a frequently large bag of animals in a single day there still survive the traces of ancient times? Perhaps their forefathers, the hordes of the "sons of Cain," driven out from some barren, inhospitable land, tormented with hunger, wandering in an unknown region, once penetrated to a locality abundant in animal life, and there hurriedly endeavoured to strengthen their wearied muscles, to restore their declining powers?

Did I not find an answer to these questions during my own expeditions? The white people who work in the colonies need a plentiful meat diet. Without it their health declines, they lose energy. The camel drovers in the Gobi and Sahara deserts live for long weeks on meal foods, but on arriving at populated places they consume a monstrous quantity of meat with a kind of animal voracity. Sometimes they do not even have the patience

to wait for its preparation, and devour pieces of raw meat still dripping with blood, suck out the marrow from the broken bones, or bolt the brains from sheep's heads cut off a moment previously.

Physiology and nomadic heredity are at the bottom of the disgusting scenes observable during native hunts. The Negroes hunt not for amusement, not for sport. The object of the hunt is always meat, as much meat as possible. When a buffalo, hippopotamus or elephant is killed in the hunt, the trackers frequently drink its blood, crawl into its inside with knives in their hands, and devour the raw meat and fat without restraint, oblivious and greedy. They emerge covered with the animal's blood, unconscious, drunk with blood. . . .

It is easy to understand that under such conditions they do not want the white hunters to participate in their hunts, and always succeed in getting them aside, directing them to a place where the unfortunate sportsmen see nothing except magpies, vultures and thrushes. European hunters also hunt unwillingly during these collective drives, for it is not difficult to get an arrow in the breast or the shoulders, and it is still easier to wound a lurking beater. But the chief reason for the aversion to such hunts is the revolting spectacle of the carnage executed on the completely invested animals.

The most interesting part of the Negro hunts is the possibility of observing the people and the animals. But this possibility I had in superabundance in the districts of the Red Volta, so I received with great gladness the news that we could return.

It was high time! In the evening sky heavy grey and

black clouds—harbingers of the approaching tornado—were creeping up. The time was arriving when after the cascades of sunny rays the sky would begin to pour down streams and torrents of warm rain, transforming the dry ravines into racing rivers and the handsome roads into thickets of impenetrable bush. It was necessary to hasten, in order to reach the port before the floods came.

We returned to Waghadugu and immediately began to pack our baggage; there also we had to finish our articles for various home and foreign newspapers, and to forward several parcels of our collections to Poland. Taking leave of our friends in Waghadugu, we set out for the south, leaving behind us the country of Moro-Naba. Again we sped past villages where in unknown hiding-places are hidden the family fetishes, where from the altars flows the blood of sacrificial birds, where the magicians converse with the spirits of ancestors and angry demi-gods, where the proud "nakompsas" pass a mediaeval existence, and where their fields are tilled by thousands of Gurunsi slaves.

These villages and these scenes are drowned in a golden haze of dust fleeing after our cars, but out of the haze emerge ever fresh pictures. I see enormous tractors, deeply furrowing the breast of the earth belonging to the descendants of black and red peoples. I see factories, traction engines, mowing-machines, irrigation canals, brick houses and barns, the glittering bands of railway lines, churches. . . .

I hear bells beating, and every beat is a menacing cry:

"Death to Hogo Uango! Death to Hogo Uango!"

On the distant horizon I see a fortress of the black peoples, standing on a high rock amid the unknown sea. The white waves beat with a roar and howl on the black mass of rock, eroding deep crevices, tearing out caves, and shaking the foundations of the ancient fortress. . . . The mighty waves know no rest; they roll over the stones, roaring and rushing on with a hiss.

"The time will come! The time will come! Onward . . . Onward. . . ."

On the rock overhanging the foaming sea, above the chaos of billows, foam, breakers and salty mists, stands Captain Hogo Uango, his eyes fixed in the distance.

He is silent. . . .

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

AMONG THE DISTRUSTFUL

EVEN quite recently the white traveller did not feel at all at his ease in the district to the south of the River Buguri, between the province of Bobo-Diulasso and the frontiers of the Gold Coast and Ivory Coast. In this part of the Upper Volta the bush belongs to the Lobi Negroes. A harsh and warlike tribe, accustomed to struggle with the hordes of invaders wandering across from the opposite bank of the Volta, they have survived many vicissitudes and histories and remained on their own soil.

The Lobi people did not cultivate fields, unless to the extent that would suffice for each "sukala," or household. They obtained their food in the jungle: the men with bows and spears, the women with machetas, cutting down the branches and trees laden with wild fruits. What use had they for fields, when any day scattered detachments of their neighbors making for the north might arrive, destroy their labour, and pillage the harvest of millet and pea-nuts? The Lobi people defended only those fields which surrounded the "sukala"; these they were well able to defend, for every enclosure was a fortress. The four low bastions standing at the corners of the quadrangle were connected by thick walls

of earth, taken from termites, mounds and beaten with straw. In the bastions and walls were embrasures, whence poisoned arrows were let fly at the pillagers. Inside the structure was situated the entire husbandry, administered by the elders and superintended by the women.

Bloody and terrible deeds made of the Lobis a distrustful people. Even after the French became masters of the regions intersected by the three Voltas the Lobis long remained suspicious. When the white man approached the village or an isolated "sukala" the inhabitants either fled into the jungle, or closely shut the one door in the walls, piling heavy stones or a block of uprooted tree against it from within; then nothing could force them into conversation with the foreign visitor. When, discouraged, he departed, a poisoned arrow often sped after him.

The "sukala" fortresses still remain, and the sombre glances of the Lobis have not yet been dispelled, but already there have been many changes in their customs. They remember that the white doctor-magicians have saved hundreds of their kinsmen and children from suffering and death, that with a magical knife they cure the once-rampant elephantiasis and the terrible sores on their children's bodies; so now they no longer flee before the man from over the sea, only from force of habit they gaze at him sombrely, from under their eyebrows.

The Lobis have now come out of their "sukalas" and have fields far into the bush, in spots suitable for agriculture. Certain of them are already abandoning the enclosure fortresses long accepted in heritage from their

fathers, and are building light, airy houses. The former inflexible warriors have now begun to send their children to the French schools, to buy woven stuffs, cigarettes, tinplate cups and dishes, needles and thread; they are not afraid of selling leopard-skins, cotton, carité oil and caoutchouc to the white merchants, and are beginning to go to the officials for advice and for justice. This revolution in the outlook of the Lobis has beeen achieved by the medicine of the white invaders from the distant coast of the unknown sea.

The Lobis are not by any means the oldest owners of the land so stoutly defended by them. Nine centuries have passed since the first Gurunsis arrived here from the south; after them pressed the consanguineous kinsmen of the modern Lobis, the tribes of Dian and Gast, and drove the Gurunsis in the direction of Waghadugu as food for the valiant Mossis—for this occurred at the end of the thirteenth century. Four centuries were to pass before the Lobis wandered hither and settled in such numbers that they were able to endure the invasions of the Dagarises, who did not find fertile land and good pasturage here and so passed on.

The Lobis know that they came from another country, and they have preserved the memory of their distant first forbears. In the melancholy evenings, when the rains are beating down, the elders gossip of how two women and one youth came from the east, established a family, built a "sukala" and became the ancestors of all the Lobis. Does not this legend, so odd in its form, refer to the divine trinity of the two women, Uei-Nda and Uei-Nga, and the man Ammo?

In the days of rest from the customary work in the fields and the bush, the elders, priests of Earth and magicians, surrounded by the youth, whisper fervently that somewhere high, very high, higher than the sun Uei-Nga, lives the greatest, most powerful of all the gods, whose name a mortal may not utter. This god is the Creator, for He created the whole world and the innumerable hordes of good and evil demons. This God still exists, but He is very far off; and so as mediators between Him and the visible world, between the Divine Trinity and human beings, serve His creations the demons, who live in the stars, in the sky and on the earth. This God retained for Himself authority only over certain demons, and in accordance with His judgment these spirits die in the course of time. The tailed comet speeding through the glitter of the nocturnal sky is a demon falling into the abyss, touched by an unknown death. The demons living among human beings gather the prayers and requests of the people, carry them into the presence of the gods, and on their commands aid mortals or scourge them with the whip of retribution and punishment.

The oldest of the Lobis know that once several demons wished to deprive the gods of authority, so the wrathful powers pressed them to the ground, depriving them of strength. These vanquished spirits cannot tear themselves away from the breast of the earth, for they are held by invisible arms. When the spirits lit the tinder of revolt and struggle they summoned the people to their side, in order jointly to overthrow the throne of the gods. But awed by the terrible spectacle of the

struggle among the gods the people remained inactive. The demons became devils, lying in wait for the slaves of the gods. They lurk in ravines and mountain crevices, in forests and in the warrens of porcupines. These red and black demons are seen and met with only by the magician, and in their image he carves out of wood or moulds from clay fetishes which protect from the vengeance of the evil spirits. The magician alone knows adjurations against these evil powers and carries on himself a talisman—a piece of leather with the figure of a cross on it—the symbol of the sun.

The good demons execute the will of the magician, appear at his summons, and at his request show themselves even to uninitiated people without working them any injury. However, if an ordinary man unexpectedly sees a demon, terrified by the sight his soul immediately forsakes its body, and death severs for ever the bonds uniting them.

The demons speak with a human voice, but only the magician can hear and understand them. But when he does not please them, when he irritates them or does not use the requisite conjurations, the spirits beat him, and sometimes the marks of the blows remain for ever. An evil, vindictive magician, who works people injury, causing diseases, failure of harvest, sterility and death, is always surrounded by evil spirits, and sometimes flees through the village, fields and bush in the form of an aerial trumpet carrying destruction. Evil spirits mould its swift, swinging forms, and with its blast it raises the dust, dry leaves and grass with a whistle and a roar, chasing them up and away.

When the evil spirits scatter the seeds of diseases on a Lobi, and they steal into his breast, his brain and eyes, who is to help the poor wretch? The white magician is far away, and for that matter the elders have no confidence in him; for if he does not use the magical knife he is a long time in effecting a cure. So the family sends the magician presents—chickens, millet, palm-oil and tobacco—and summon him to them in the "sukala." The "man working in the shade" arrives, examines the patient, mutters an incantation in an unknown tongue, and then begins to ring a magical bell and to whistle on a fife made of bone. The magician's activities last a long time, for he repeats continually fresh incantations, not knowing that in another continent his distant Asiatic kinsmen, the Shamans, are doing the same. Having taken counsel with the demons, the magician gives advice and brings medicine made of herbs, of dry grass, the powdered liver, heart and spleen of animals, birds and reptiles.

Close to the houses before the doors the Lobis raise altars in honour of male or female divinities. The male altars are three conical clay pillars, sometimes painted red or in white spots; sometimes they have eyes of mussel shells and other organs made of pebbles. The female altars are round vessels made of clay and built into the earth; they frequently have a hole in one spot, and in it stands a small cone. By the altars are placed trays of seed and ashes and dry branches loaded with offerings—pieces of hand-woven material, skins, ringlets of hair, feathers.

Under the roofs inside the Lobi huts or in niches over

the doors are hidden little fetishes, protectors against evil demons. The elders know the names of the fetishes —Kponintan, Dakon, Zogra, Lampo, Suga, Timpo. In their wooden or stone bodies the souls of ancestors have their abode, and the demons like to dwell in peace beside them. Every Lobi knows that before going hunting, to work in the fields, or on a long journey, it is necessary to hang the breast amulets close to the altar and the fetishes, so that the spirits of the ancestors and the demons may accompany them, to protect him on the road and aid him in his enterprise.

Kponintan is a fetish having the image of the demon who pursues robbers, tale-bearers and slanderers. A certain white man was very anxious to bring at least one such fetish to Europe, seeing how indispensable it is to civilized society; but the wise Lobis told him that among the white people ancient red and white-spotted Kponintan would die of overwork—so they had heard from those kinsmen whom fate had thrown into the jungle of the white people.

A terrible jungle is that, where trees of stone and iron form walls hard and strong as rocks. Narrow tracks run between them. Everywhere shine and glitter the burning eyes of roaring and pulsing monsters. There are no tribes, families and "sukalas" governed by wise elders in that jungle. Each man lies in wait for another like a leopard. Everyone, like a hyena, slanderously and malignantly laughs at the others . . . at a funeral repast. . . . Some there are like snakes with poison fangs, others like venomous centipedes and bloodthirsty spiders hidden in the dusk.

A terrible jungle is that, where a swine stinking with mud bites through the throat of a noble lion, and the gentle roe is transformed into a rapacious panther. There is no salvation there, for no one distinguishes an enemy from a friend, neighbour fires the house of neighbor—unmindful that he himself may be consumed—father is afraid of son, and brother lies in wait for brother. . . .

The fetishes of the white people stand in the temples silent and impotent, petrified with fear. The evil demons cursed by the great Ammo are again raising their heads, and gloomily dream of the destruction of the sacrificial altars, raised by former generations in honour of the good gods.

The wise Lobis shake their heads as they listen to their kinsmen who know the jungle of the white people; and shrugging their shoulders, they say: "What match for the sin and crime nesting in the distant jungle will our good, tribal Kponintan be? The Almighty Ammo Himself is needed there with his sword-lightning, with his thunder-menace, with his gale-whip, to clear, to tear out by the root, to burn up this jungle as our fathers burnt down the bush when seeking for good fertile land. . . ."

The Lobis gaze with mistrustful eye at arrivals returning from the country of the whites. They come back other than they went. They forget the old gods; they are indifferent to the tombs of ancestors and the good customs; they bring with them crime, diseases of the body and the soul, injustice, deceit and hatred. Evidently the evil spirits have flung their enchantment over

them first of all, and have let them go unpunished so that the seed of falsehood should be scattered far and wide over the whole earth. The fathers stare contemptuously at the sons who arrive from America, Europe and Liberia in the dress of the white people, in their old stained hats, in their worn-out shoes. They bring nothing good with them to the "sukala." They talk much and often boldly; but their words are always deceptive, as slippery as snakes, arousing alarm and irritating dreams. . . .

. . . So it is not surprising that a certain Lobi, old Rirankala, began to reflect the very morning after his son's return from Europe:

"What has happened to him?" muttered his father. "For when he was born we did all that should be done for his mother. We made sacrifices to the fetishes, the priest hung amulets on his breast, all the rites were performed at the appointed time. I taught him to work on the fields, to follow the cattle, to shoot with a bow, and to weave long white belts of cotton, which afterwards his mother sewed together and changed into a 'bubu.' "

The old man had no reproach against himself—indeed, when his son became a man his father had bought him a wife in a neighbouring village. Sulian was a good maiden, and no one ever saw her wantoning with the lads, and none of them ever said that she was his lover. Yet the young Buhiari did not wish to stay at home. Three months after the marriage he disappeared from the house and was lost to their knowledge.

"Why did I make so many sacrifices on the altar on the day of their marriage? Why did I invite so many

people to the banquet, which lasted seven days without a break?" Rirankala asked himself mournfully. The one good result was that Sulian was a strong, and willing worker, and when her husband left she wept a little, but soon began to work hard enough for two people.

A year later the old man learnt from a soldier relative that Buhiari had arrived at the great town by the sea, and had sailed somewhere as a stoker in a ship. He returned after three years. . . . He had no money, but he was wearing a striped sailor's shirt, ragged trousers, down-at-heel yellow shoes, a gun-metal watch without hands, and a soft felt hat with a large greasy stain all round it. Buhiari began by going to his neighbours, getting drunk on palm wine and causing a brawl; then returning home, he began to beat his wife for no reason whatever. His father and younger brothers defended her with difficulty.

"Listen, Buhiari!" his father said to him. "The evil spirits of madness have bewitched you. To-morrow morning at sunrise take two white chickens, carry them to the priest and ask him to offer them to the fetishes for you. Perhaps the evil spirits will leave you. . . ."

"Sacrifices to the fetishes!" His son broke into a laugh and abruptly gave vent to a protracted whistle. "There is no sense in those wooden dolls! In one town I saw a whole cupboard of the little monsters. The whites had stuck numbers on them, and nothing happened. Your fetishes are stupid, grandmotherly nonsense!"

The old man was terrified when he heard these words, and began to whisper adjurations and to glance at the

household fetishes. Yet his curiosity overcame him, and he asked:

"Perhaps you'll say there isn't any Ammo, or any Uei-Nda?"

"Of course there isn't!" the young man exclaimed, gazing at his handless watch. "If there were they would kill me immediately for my audacity; and nothing has happened so far."

Rirankala left his son. "The gods are patient; they don't know anything about it yet, but when the fetishes carry it to them they won't forgive," he thought. "Buhiari will perish, and the hand of the gods will fall on him and on us also. Woe to us!"

Shortly after this conversation Buhiari went to a neighbouring village and settled there, working in the household of a certain villager. But he sent home news by a passing native that he had to burn out and plough a new field, for which the villager was to give him his daughter Maniga for wife.

The old man was greatly afflicted. To have one more woman worker in the house was good, but not Maniga! He knew her, for she roved around the neighbouring villages having affairs with the men, and was savage, insolent and ungovernable. She had already had four children by her lovers—which for that matter does not bring any infamy on the Negro maiden, for until the day when she goes to the home of her husband she can dispose of herself as she pleases.

"It is good that she has children," the old man considered. "That means she is not barren. . . . But if only it were another, and not Maniga . . . She will

immediately begin to be faithless to Buhiari; he will beat her; it will be an unending scandal! A mockery! And may it not end in a crime? Buhiari seems to have a quick fist, and in his heart anger is continually burning, like heat beneath ashes . . ."

Three months the young Negro laboured, working off the marriage dowry to be paid to Maniga's father. As the days passed Rirankala observed that Buhiari never made any appearance at home, that he worked continually for his future father-in-law, and went to the settlement of Gau to sell to the white merchants the caoutchouc he had gathered in the bush.

"He works for them," the old man thought bitterly, "but at home he only drinks, causes scenes, and says foolish words which draw down the anger of the fetishes on the 'sukala.'"

One day as Rirankala was going through his fields, suddenly he heard Sulian crying frightfully. He ran immediately towards the enclosure, and then the old man perceived his daughter-in-law sitting above the abyss of a ravine close to the house. She was sobbing loudly, tearing her head, face and breasts with her finger-nails, and screaming wildly and frightfully, like a mew when another carries off the fish she has won from the water. Sulian was screaming in a broken voice:

"Buhiari, my husband, is demanding a divorce! He has already been to the priest of Earth and to the council of elders. . . . He said that he didn't wish to have Sulian for wife because she hadn't borne him a child. . . . Why did he abandon his wife and not see her for three years? . . . Why? . . . Why has he left the

'sukala' now? . . . Oh! Sulian knows that he wants to bring a new wife to the hut. . . . Maniga will be his wife. . . . She has had her fourth child and it will become Buhiari's, for it is still unweaned and does not belong to its father. . . . The three elder ones Maniga has given to the lovers by whom she had them. . . . Maniga! Maniga! . . . She is like a bedraggled dishclout! . . . like a mat trodden by a hundred dirty feet! To abandon Sulian for Maniga! To abandon Sulian, who was as innocent as the lamb sucking its mother! . . ."

She shouted and sobbed, repeating her complaints and her contemptuous opinion of her rival again and again, and making her tear-suffused face and her heaving black breasts more and more bloody with her nails. Then she began to scream a threat:

"Sulian was quiet and submissive, like a sheep gone astray in the jungle. . . . You thought Sulian hadn't her own will and strength! . . . O! O! O! You'll remember Sulian! You have forgotten that my grandmother was Pann, the invisible queen of the Diulas, and a high-priestess: wise Pann, who directed the secret meetings of the Dyoro,[1] made human sacrifices to the gods and executed a bloody vengeance on the enemies of the tribe. . . . You have forgotten that Sulian's mother was Anntim from the clan of the ancient Tegessies, who knew the place of the holy hidden stone of the goddess of Earth? My mother purified the water of the River Poni when it began to poison our people and spread death.[2] You have forgotten that? Buhiari has forgotten that?

[1] A secret religious organization among the Lobis.

[2] Historical facts of recent times, which indicate the existence of a matriarchate among the Lobis and Tegessies.

Maniga has forgotten that? Sulian remembers. . . . She remembers also the counsels of her grandmother and mother—how to remove a woman who enters the house of the husband. To remove . . . for ever. . . . You will remember Sulian! Sulian will not go with her complaints to the whites; she will not go to the priest and the council of elders! . . Sulian will summon the spirit of her grandmother Pann, and she will teach her how to fulfil her vengeance! O! O! O! . . ."

The woman again fell to sobbing and repeating the terrible, sombre menaces. When she was completely imbrued in her own blood and could weep no more, she took a macheta, a new calabash, and a pot of coals and made her way towards the jungle.

"Bad!" muttered the old man. "Charms . . . poison . . . bad!" All hope abandoned his heart, and black thoughts took possession of him.

The same evening Sulian returned home carrying a dark, viscid fluid in the calabash. She boiled it long over the fire, until a dense, sickly vapour began to arise from the pot. The woman put the burnt powder residue into a leather wallet and smashed the pot, throwing the shards into the bottom of the ravine.

But evidently, in preparing the poison Sulian was the first to fall a victim to it. During the night she fell ill and lost consciousness, and when the sun peered over the hills she sighed heavily and went rigid.

"Buhiari can bring Maniga to the 'sukala' in peace now," the old man thought. He mourned for his dead daughter-in-law, and was grieved that he had not been able to summon the neighbours according to custom to

lament and to praise her in the last moment of her life.

"The fetishes are angry and are beginning to avenge themselves on us!" Rirankala said to his younger sons.

They began the preparations for the funeral. The neighbouring women were summoned to wash and attire Sulian.

"She died badly. . . . The fetishes are angry," an old woman said with conviction as she approached the body. "No one closed her eyelids. . . . No one straightened out the joints and the fingers before they went stiff. . . . We shall put her into the grave in a lying position. . . . That is bad, for it is contrary to our customs and will bring the anger of the gods down on the house. . . ."

Old Rirankala shook his head sadly, and fear gripped his heart more and more. Meantime with shrieks and weeping the women carried the body out of the house and laid it on a mat in the shade of an orange-tree. Others brought water from the well, long strips of white material, carité oil and red earth. Four young weeping-women ran up and began to lament, crying:

"A white bird has flown away? No! It is Sulian who has departed. A white flower has fallen from the tree? No! It is Sulian who has died. A white butterfly is flying towards heaven? No! It is the soul of Sulian journeying to the region of ancestors! . . . Ohe! Ohe! Ohe-e-e!"

The women washed the body of the dead woman and anointed it with oil mixed with red earth, from which it took on a vivid bronze colour in memory of her former mighty red-skinned ancestors. Amid the mournful wailing of the weeping-women two old women wound Sulian

from her feet to her ears in long white cotton bands; then each in turn bowed over the face of the dead woman and long whispered to her, confiding to her their cares and secrets.

Meantime the music, a balaphone and a drum, arrived. The women now began to sing:

"Beautiful young Sulian! Your soul is abandoning the body! . . . Despair not, Sulian! Remember, that thy father Rugi has departed to his ancestors, thy mother Anntim has departed and joined the souls of her grandfathers and great-grandfathers. . . . Now, thy soul will join their shades. Without care wilt thou look down at our earth, whence all must depart. Such is the will of the great gods and the fetishes of the Lobis, the Tegessies, Serfors and the innumerable human tribes and races! Despair not, Sulian! Go in peace, beautiful young Sulian!"

At intervals during this mourning song the oldest women neighbours broke off and walked away from the dead body lying on the mat: white, or grey haired old women, with faces of tight brown skin wrinkled like the bark of a mouldering tree, and lips with a piece of bone through them, and withered, revealing a black gap furnished only with yellow fangs. Raising their heads towards heaven as though they were the skulls of the ancient dead, the beldams howled incomprehensible words in hoarse voices, and suddenly began to jump, to run and stamp the feet, taking little, almost imperceptible steps and shaking their lean bones and withered breasts. With this dance the women rejoiced the spirits in the

vicinity and implored their favour to the dead and to themselves.

Then a short dance was begun by the young women: fresh and often beautiful in their exuberant, passionate forms and movements. Only one did not dance, did not sing and did not speak. She embraced Sulian's knees with her young arms and fixed her large, tearful eyes on her face. It was Buhiari's younger sister, a quiet and silent maiden, whom Sulian had protected.

The four weeping-women stood afar off, turned to various points of the horizon. Their bronze young bodies were frozen into an attitude of despair. They threw their hands above their heads, shielded their eyes with them, or stretched out their palms imploringly towards heaven.

"Sulian has left us!" they wailed. "She will vanish like a little sheep in the jungle, like a stone in a deep pool of the Poni, like a bird in the zenith. . . . Sulian rejoiced our hearts with her goodness and modesty, gladdened our eyes with her beauty and her gentle smile. She was kind, was this daughter of Anntim, born of the Tegessies! She was faithful and domesticated, this wife of Buhiari! She was humble and helpful, this daughter-in-law of Rirankala! She was a sincere friend and a good neighbour, was Sulian! Why hast thou forsaken thy home, thy village, thy lands, and us all, Sulian? Sulian! . . . Ohe! Ohe! Oi-ohe! Yu! Yu!"

Suddenly Buhiari appeared among the women surrounding the dead. He had troubled eyes and quivering lips. According to custom ashes were scattered on his

head, and his face was covered with lime in sign of mourning. Pretending to weep and to be in despair, he walked among the crowd and gathered the funeral gifts: baskets of millet, trays of kus-kus, calabashes of dolo and bangi, sacks of salt, carité-oil, bottles of palm-oil, and cors.

The singing and dancing lasted till midnight. The villagers made offerings on the household altars in order to safeguard themselves against the demons, who are always drawn to the place where a dead human being lies. At midnight the priest of Earth arrived, and bending over the dead body, asked:

"If thou hast died by the will of the gods, remain in peace, Sulian. If a human hand has killed thee, let that part of thy soul which is close by enter into thy body, and then give the sign, O Sulian!"

The poor woman, plunged into despair in the last hours of her life, lay immobile; and even the glimmers of firelight straying over her face did not animate her.

"The funeral is to take place to-morrow!" the priest cried, and began to send prayers to the fetishes and to the spirits of the ancestors seated in the dusky thicket of the orange-trees. Sulian's women friends plaited a litter of boughs and lianas, lay her body on it and carried it to the hut. The crowd of villagers with their wives and children filled the enclosure and all the rooms of the "sukala." The feast began; calabashes of dolo, trays of kus-kus, and baked meats were passed around. . . . From time to time one of the members of her household struck a drum and began to shout:

"Sulian was gentle, beautiful and just! What has happened to her, since she is not with us?"

The weeping-women answered in a chorus:

"Sulian has gone far, far away to the region of ancestors. . . . Yu! Yu!"

Just before the evening of the following day Sulian's body was laid on the litter. The family and the neighbours approached Sulian and took farewell of her with the words:

"Sleep peacefully in the happy country. Say not there that we still remain here on the earth!"

The women raised the litter and made their way towards the bush, where a freshly dug grave was already waiting. The crowd went with shouts, songs and tumult, played music, or danced and stamped with their feet to drive away the evil spirits. Only the relations remained behind, engaged in the preparation of a new funeral repast.

Meantime in the bush Sulian's body was laid in the grave, her feet to the east. If a man had been buried he would have lain with his head to the east, to signify that his forefathers came from the east, from regions forgotten by the greyest of the elders and by the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of those elders—perhaps from the valley of the Pyramids, the Sphinx and Osiris, perhaps from the sombre, rocky fatherland of Cush, the son of the fratricide Cain. The women did not come from the east—only the men, making for the west and gaining wives in every place where after a bloody struggle the mighty, wearied feet of the wanderers were set firmly. . . .

The grave was filled in with earth, and stones were heaped over it so that the wild beasts should not get to her; a little opening leading to the body was made in the ground to enable the soul of the dead woman to visit its earthly tenement during the first few days. A sheep and several chickens were slaughtered on the fresh grave, and calabashes of food and drink for Sulian's soul, for the shades of ancestors and for the demons were placed on it. Praising the dead woman and uttering despairing cries, the crowd returned to Rirankala's hut for a new banquet.

For some days the priest poured out the blood of sacrificial chickens on the household altar, the inmates of the house scattered ashes on their heads, the neighbours ate and drank in Rirankala's enclosure, and then everybody forgot the dead. Life flowed on as before in labour, cares, terror of spirits, under the yoke and whip of the merciless sun-god and devil together.

One evening the widower-son came to the old villager and said: "Father, I am not going to marry Maniga!"

"What?" said his father in amazement. "You have wasted so much time and labour on the dowry. . . ."

"I shall not marry her," his son repeated. "Sulian said that she was a bedraggled dishclout. . . . She said the truth. . . . I am going to seek gold and white pebbles that strike fire in the sun . . . Perhaps I shall be successful . . . for others have found them." [3]

[3] In the Gaya province gold has indeed been found (20 to 50 grs. per ton) as the result of the disintegration of amphibolic granites, quartzite gneiss and diabase, and the Englishman, J. Harley, declares that the rock masses of Diebugu and Galguli hold mineral deposits containing diamonds. These deposits of gold-bearing geological strata constitute the continuation of the deposits in the Gold Coast.

"Go!" Rirankala answered, "though more evil demons are to be found there than anywhere else. . . ."

"I am not afraid of evil demons," Buhiari interrupted him. "Human beings are worse, and do more harm."

He took a macheta, a spade, some provisions, and departed. The old man waited a long time, a whole year, for him. But his son did not return.

Close to the spots where the earth has hidden the gold it teems with evil, bloody and seductive demons. Some of them cast enchantments over a man, and then a frenzy takes possession of him. The man perishes, falling to the bottom of precipitous ravines, drowning in the depths of rivers, or suffocated in the warrens he has excavated owing to a fall of stones or earth overwhelming him. Other demons take on human form, and steal the gold wrested from the earth in the sweat of the brow, in the blood of arms and legs; or shoot from bows or carbines, plunge a knife in the back. . . .

Buhiari did not return. . . .

Old Rirankala understood that the hand of the fetishes had fallen on his "sukala" by the will of the gods whom Buhiari had affronted. He made sacrifices to the gods and wept for his son. He knew not where he had lain his bold, restless head, poisoned by demons encountered in the jungle of the white people. He often went to the Gaya district, where on the road from Galguli to Lorhosso stand the ancient ruins of a fortress. The old man had heard from his grandfather that five centuries previously the Porto people [4] had arrived here from beyond the sea, and had built these thick walls

[4] So the Negroes call the Portuguese.

and powerful bastions which sowed fire. They made distant expeditions and plundered the gold obtained by the Lobi, Serfor and Tegessie peoples, murdering them without mercy. The old man surmised that the shades of the murdered had flown thither to seek the Porto people and avenge themselves on them. Together with their shades might come the soul of Buhiari, bound to them by the gold frenzy.

On arriving at the ruins the old man hid himself in the bushes and killed a cock for the soul of his son. He knew not whether Buhiari was dead or whether he had wandered somewhere afar, but he believed that he would never see him again, for death was looking the old man in his faded pupils, and he felt that the fetishes would not be appeased.

To the country of Rirankala, Buhiari and Sulian came my expedition, and we halted in Gaya. My guide was the assistant administrator, M. Haumant, the son of a famous Slavonic scholar and professor at the Sorbonne. My new acquaintance afforded me the opportunity of glancing through the governmental archives, where the officials and officers had deposited their random notes, observations, and sometimes very far-reaching investigations into the life of the Lobi and other natives, their history and the nature of their country; he summoned a meeting of elders and priests for my benefit, and I talked with them about their gods and fetishes and of that which had already begun to fade in the memory of the Lobis—of the God Creator and of the great Powers governing the earth; he conducted me to Sulian's grave; he made me acquainted with a Lobi soldier who had

brought from Europe memories of the white men's jungle; and he showed me the ruins of the Portuguese fortress,—although I think it was the large "sukala" of some royal native family, for neither Portuguese nor French articles have been found in the excavations, but many shards of Negro vessels and brass snakes and fish, totems brought from the east and used by the Kulangos, kinsmen of the present-day Lobis. And besides, even the plan and the architecture of this fortress is not distinguished in any regard from the "sukala" of the inhabitants of the Gaya province.

From M. Haumant I learnt that the soil of the Gaya province is not fertile, although a number of rivers flow through a country populated by 232,000 people of various tribes. Hitherto, agriculture has developed only slowly. The natives sow rice, millet, maize, and cotton, gather in the jungle the carité-oil which constitutes the wealth of the population, and raise cattle.[5] The authorities are endeavouring to extend the area under agriculture, to increase the fertility of the soil, and to build and equip native granaries. The population generally is submitting to the management of the French administration with continually increasing confidence. Only the north-east section of the province, where an anarchic attitude and the vendetta have lasted till the present day, is not yet morally subdued by the white people.

I learnt that in the hilly regions the average lowest temperature is in January, 62° F.; the highest on the plains is in February, 93° F. The rainy season lasts hardly 67 days, and during this period the rainfall is 60

[5] 60,000 cows and bulls, 143,000 sheep, 167,000 goats.

inches. The Gaya province lies within the Sudanese zone, so in regard to flora it is in no way different from the Sudan—the same high grasses and prickly bushes, baobabs, carités, "nere," "finza," and caoutchouc lianas —and only in the south are found the largest of the palms, the fan-leaved borassus (*Borassus flabelliformus*), from the seeds of which the Negroes make beads, chaplets for trading with Musselmans, and talismans, while the Europeans make—buttons. The fauna also possesses no specific features—the same monkeys, antelopes and beasts of prey, rarely elephants; in the rivers hippopotami and crocodiles; in the forested mountains, snakes, tiger-pythons and the spitting naia; in the sands, vipers; in the bush, the two-yard-long green snake —the totem of certain native families.

The European firms, of which here there are very few, buy from the natives carité butter, caoutchouc, cotton and gold.

The Haumants, with whom we spent three very pleasant days crowded with incident, afforded us an opportunity of convincing ourselves as to the former warlike instincts of the now peaceable Lobis. The warrior's spirit has not yet died out in these distrustful people, as we noticed distinctly when a "war" was organized for us on a plain not far from the ruins of the "Portuguese" fortress.

About a thousand natives in calabash helmets, ornamented with horse-manes and feathers and armed with bows, were divided into two opposite camps. The battle-drums rolled deafeningly, trumpets and fifes made of wood, bone, and the horns of large antelopes sounded,

a thousand throats screamed, and the "war" began.

First came experienced warriors, men famous for their eloquence, and began to hurl at their opponents filthy nicknames, jeers and words affronting the honour of the naked knights. As I observed the Lobis' menacing, sombre features, painted in white and red stripes, while their breasts and legs were covered with spots of yellow oxide of iron mixed with oil, into my memory came the faces of the valiant leaders of the red-skinned Iroquois and Delawares.

After this "skirmish of tongues" was ended the champions withdrew to their own ranks, and the two lines of warriors began to run towards each other, waving their bows and pretending to shoot arrows, and simultaneously shouting battle-cries. Suddenly at some fifty paces away from each other they came to a halt; then one division began to run away, chased by the other division. After a while the rôle was changed. This manoeuvre was repeated several times, until finally the warriors were mingled in a furious combat, where in the absence of other arms, the powerful fists thrashed and the springy, lean legs kicked.

After some time the trumpets sounded, the fifes moaned and the warriors began to withdraw and to reform the two camps, leaving the "slain" on the "field of glory." Then from the jungle women singing a mourning song came running, and began to gather the "corpses" and carry them in the direction of the village. The crowds of black loafers, the warriors and the "defunct" burst into a great shout of laughter, although their eyes shone like those of our northern wolf.

M. Haumant had done wisely in not allowing the warriors to have arrows in their quivers. Unquestionably in that case we should have had not merely counterfeited "deceased" but a real funeral, and more than one at that.

I pondered over the Negroes' method of attack. What was the purpose of this advance and swift retirement? I suppose it is a strategic manoeuvre, during which the warriors look for the leaders of their opponents, and study the nature of their arms and certain fighting qualities, such as the swiftness of the run. When this review of the opposing forces is ended there follows the battle or else flight from the field of struggle.

Putting a money gift into the hands of the "leaders" for the purchase of "dolo" and for consolation to the "thrashed," we returned to Gaya, where after dinner we saw a Lobi tam-tam. Naked girls danced, holding one another's hands and walking in a circle with a slow step, shaking their thighs, shoulders and breasts. The men danced in a second, outer circle. They wore girdles around their haunches and feather ornaments on their heads, while their bodies were painted with white figures of various forms. They went with a measured step, raising their feet like storks and cranes stepping over mud, and turning their heads set on supple, mobile necks. This was a dance of victory, and was executed to the sound of balaphones and drums.

In the evening we were invited to the house of Mme. Pelloux-Prayer, the wife of the absent administrator, who was making an official tour of the province. The administrator's wife showed us her husbandry, the

chickens and ducks, a domesticated crowned crane and a friendly marabou. The marabou was an enormous bird, very like an old-fashioned, bald-headed professor, with a long and somewhat too rubescent nose, an excessively high collar, and a not too scrupulously clean white waistcoat beneath the black frock-coat.

The marabou rubbed his bald head against his mistress and avidly stared at the little pool where the ducks with their ducklings were swimming. Observing this, Mme. Prayer struck the "professor" on his bald spot; and he, awkwardly hopping away, opening his wings and clapping with his beak, ran off in high dudgeon.

"Some days ago that rascal took advantage of my back being turned and gobbled up five of my ducklings," Mme. Pelloux-Prayer complained.

"That estimable gentleman who is so concentrated at the end of his nose has a very good appetite," I remarked.

"Oh!" the administrator's wife exclaimed, "he never has enough! He would gobble us all up if he could. . . ."

The "professor" stood a little way off, and seemed not to be listening, his head bent on one side. Probably he was smiling indulgently and muttering to himself:

"What is madam saying! As if I should dare!"

When next morning we drove away from Gaya settlement, the marabou was standing on a rock, plunged in thought, but continually squinting in the direction of the chicks running about in the yard. But he was hindered by the company who were seeing us off—the hospitable Haumants and Mme. Pelloux-Prayer.

At the moment there is no road running directly from

Gaya to the south and the Ivory Coast. There exist only native tracks, running through the jungle in the direction of the sea. The Negroes travel by these paths or the Moorish traders from Sahel ride along them on their hardy, lugubrious asses. But there was no road for our motor-cars, so we were forced to return to Bobo Diulasso, and only thence set out for the frontier of the Ivory Coast.

On the road we halted in Diebugu, a very picturesque settlement situated close to the River Buguriba. Here we saw the drama of the white man. At the head of the district was the young and intelligent administrator, M. Rognon. He was a splendid shot and a perfect hunter, and in his hunts was accompanied by his wife —a dainty little Parisienne who was expert at handling an army carbine and a dead-shot at hippopotami and antelopes. This brave little woman, very musical and accustomed to Parisian life, affected a high spirit in order to be a moral support to her husband in this distant outpost. But M. Rognon studied her poorly little face, with its great, bright, unhealthy fire, and her heavy-lidded eyes, with anxiety and alarm. He knew that the merciless sun had already succeeded in pouring into her blood its inapprehensible, universally distributed poison, that any day it might destroy this delicate being; and then what would happen?

This question never vanished from the administrator's troubled, afflicted eyes, and never left his clouded forehead.

Meantime he was continually compelled to be away from home; for the jungle, in which the native villages,

the little fields and the hordes of magicians are concealed, needed continual oversight. The district is inhabited by Negroes with an anarchic tendency, who resort to the law of bloody vengeance; while the tribes are governed by chiefs who are not always derived from those tribes, and so do not always command the natives' obedience. In order to assist the administrators the authorities have set up councils composed of influential, affluent men who support the colonial administration and the chiefs appointed by it. But the magicians and Mohammedans smuggle firearms into the region for the warlike Lobis and Dagarises. During the last two years the administration has relieved the natives of 750 firearms, which were supplied from the Gold Coast by magicians and Musselman agitators dissatisfied with the slow advance of Islam. For out of 232,000 inhabitants in the Gaya province, the adherents of the Prophet number scarcely 4,000 people.

During the existence of the vendetta weapons have caused hundreds of crimes. Since the authorities have been diligently guarding the frontiers, and the local gunmakers, discovered with difficulty by the colonial officials, have disappeared, criminal acts occur rarely in any part of the province. Of recent years the vendetta has caused barely two murders and eight attempts on life. This is an insignificant number in comparison with that which used to prevail up to some fifteen years ago.

From his office the administrator must watch to see that the chiefs compel the natives to lay down roads through the bush and to build and repair bridges across the rivers and streams. One of M. Rognon's most im-

portant tasks is the encouragement of the population to take up field labour, to build up a reserve of provisions, and to struggle with famine, which forces the natives to abandon their old centres and seek new, more fertile land. Although not very extensive,[6] the agriculture of the province demands immense labour and great exertions on the part of the four or five officials controlling it.

In the jungle around Diebugu we came across the large tracks of the Robert antelope and various smaller varieties of these animals; on the muddy banks of the Buguriba we watched with bated breath droves of buffaloes and hippopotami; but we succeeded in getting a shot at them only in the Ivory Coast, for which we were making.

Everywhere on the road flocks of partridges and guinea-fowls were feeding; along the edges of the jungle passed bustards, and the pert, dark-bronze rock hens rummaged. Sometimes, just before sunset, a little hare, like our rabbits in its size and movements, would scamper out of the jungle; or Pharaoh's chickens, with feathering like a pheasant's, would run across our path. Here we had no lack of fresh meat!

During our hunt in the jungle around Diebugu I for the first and happily the last time had an attack of sunstroke. A terrible and ill-boding thing it is!

I was in my usual dress, with a good cork helmet on

[6] Millet, 75,000 tons; rice paddy, 155 tons; maize, 18,000 tons; pea-nuts, 6,000 tons; beans, 15,000 tons. Of this quantity of gross harvest there are left for export: millet, 2,000 tons; rice, 50 tons; maize, 100 tons. In addition, the European merchants purchase 100 tons of carité-oil from the natives.

my head. How many times I had been grilled by the sun while wearing it on the heights of Futa-Jallon, in the bush of Kaarta, around Waghadugu, and in hundreds of other localities! But here I suddenly felt the rays of the sun were changed into a kind of fine dust, hanging in the air and stealing into the brain through the air-holes in the helmet, through invisible chinks in the cork and material, through the pores of my skin and through the bones of my skull. I felt that I was inhaling this poisonous dust, that I was swallowing it even with my glance. I rejoiced when I perceived the river, and my lungs began to gulp down the fresh breeze. But that was the very cause of my downfall!

The river sparkled and glittered; it spouted a million reflected rays; they shivered in the air into fiery dust, and then the skin, lungs, eyes and bones again swallowed it down, and it poisoned the blood and the heart.

An invisible hand suddenly struck me on the head; with a flaming iron band it compressed by throat, stopped my breathing. Before my eyes huge wheels began to roll and spurt red and green fire; they bounced and whirled until they inflamed my eyes, so that I felt the tongues of flame beneath my eyelids. A burning glow as of molten heavy metal flowed into the depths of my body; it scalded and dried up the tongue, the windpipe and the lungs, while thousands of tiny flames licked around my heart and fermented the blood within it. The blood pulsed in my temples, my heart pounded noisily in my inflamed breast, a cold perspiration stood out on my forehead and palms.

I ran to the river to wet my head and to wash my

face, eyes and hands. This gave me a little relief; so, pressing my temples with my hands, I staggered to the car, left nearly two miles away, and returned to Diebugu.

A native was fetched who was trained in simple remedies; and he gave me some drops, applied hot compresses to the feet, massaged me, and spreading a skin coverlet over me, recommended me to stay in bed. After sunset I was seized with shivering fits and tossed in them till midnight. However, next morning I was well again, although I felt a great weakness in every part of my body. Now I myself experienced that suffering which my poor brave wife had passed through, for she had had two attacks of sunstroke as well as a dose of fever implanted in her by the treacherous mosquitoes.

The Rognons were very kind and solicitous. They did not want to let us depart, and when we drove away they gave us beautiful keepsakes; whenever we look at them in our Warsaw home we recall the glittering eyes and pale cheeks of the young woman and the anxious face of her husband. Truly, I could willingly have spent several days with them, but the sky was overcast more and more frequently; black phantasmic clouds slipped past of nights, and amid their masses and skeins crept the snakes of lightning, arousing alarm and ominous forebodings.

These were dry tornadoes. But when the wind burst forth, on its swiftly beating wings it brought the muffled echo of distant thunders and the humid tang of rain.

Barely a few weeks separated us from winter, when hot torrents of rain would drop through the burning air

and rebound, would tear into the stony earth, quickening the sleeping roots of trees and shrubs, rending the hardened, parched pellicle from the grains of grasses and from the kernels of the naked giants of the jungle, from the seeds in which the sparks of life were hidden. Soon would occur the mysterious orgy of fructification, the age-old amorous struggle between Heaven with its power, the heat of the sun which kills and betrays, and Earth, with its immutable fruitfulness and passionate frenzy for nursing its young on putrefying cemeteries crowded with unburied corpses.

Prudence constrained us to speed as quickly as possible to the port, to the sea, to the great mobile, trackless road which led hence!—to the homeland! . . .

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE MIRACLE

MIRACLES do exist on this earth, magic wands do exist! Such a magic wand is the River Laraba: the miracle is the Ivory Coast. Closing his eyes on one bank of the Upper Volta and opening them on the opposite, which is within the confines of the adjacent colony, the traveller would not recognize the landscape.

There to the north, in the greyish-yellow plain of parched jungle, the only rest to the eyes is provided by the high, dusky, fan-leaved palm and the green carité; here across the river the sight is caressed with spacious emerald-green savannahs, and with groves of trees covered with fresh leaves, where the oil-palm and the mighty fan-palms are interlaced with the boughs of leafy trees unknown to me, and where the juicy stalks of grasses and the young shoots of bushes ascend halfway up their trunks. Here the traveller's eye, now grown accustomed to the yellow landscape and monotonous, drab-coloured plain, rests with joy on the rare golden spots standing out amid the general background of green, and welcomes the naked baobabs as good old friends.

We had left behind us the last large settlement of

Upper Volta, Banfora, where we saw the local authorities forcing the natives to mend the roads and to cultivate fields. There on the plain of Upper Volta, from the northern boundary as far as the frontier-river Laraba, France struggles ardently and perseveringly with the Sudanese nature, drawing in the Negroes by her example, and, if needs be, by compulsion,—constraining them to labour but to labour for the common good.

To the south of Laraba everything is changed. In the Ivory Coast Nature does not demand effort; here everything can be achieved by tranquil labour; for wealth lies fallow, scattered with a munificent hand over the earth. At his service man has a fertile soil, enchanting forests, an opulent population and several open gates to the great, boundless roads of the ocean. As the plough-share lays bare the fresh black soil, so every movement of the muscles here wins new treasures hidden in the earth, in the dusk of the forests, on the savannahs, in the sea, in the rivers. Unquestionably this is one of the most alluring of all the colonies: one where the capital expended doubles before one's eyes, where the effort exerted is transformed immediately into money.

Such are the positive attractions of the Coast for men of enterprise. For the traveller there are other features to be found which are precious to him and hold his attention—the abundance of animals, the variety of the climate, the beautiful landscapes, and the tribes, with their extremely primitive psychosis.

The colony is now passing an existence planned and based on results exactly foreseeable. Nature raises no

obstacle to the white man in the demonstration of his ingenuity, genius and energy. Truly the sun flames here as in the Sudan, it may even feel as though it were still closer to one's helmet, but under the boughs of the enormous trees lurks a refreshing shade; from the numerous rivers and streams comes a mollifying breeze, from the life-giving and salty-invigorating sea a scented blast. So the white colonists and traders, and, following their example, the blacks, gather the riches of this splendid, joyous country with a confident hand.

Twenty years ago the Ivory Coast was merely a geographical term which conveyed no meaning to anyone. On one occasion one of the governors of the colony remarked:

"The peace which France brings with her, the equalization of rights as between conqueror and conquered the liberation of the slaves, the stamping out of domestic wars and invasions, safe, unrestricted movement over the whole territory—this peace now reigns over almost the entire area of the Gold Coast."

These words were uttered hardly fourteen years ago; since then the colony has differed in no way from the average province of any of the European states in regard to internal order and peace, while its industrial and trading balance shows a continual increase.[1]

Up to the present the forests constitute the colony's greatest wealth. Of the 195,000 square miles which compose its total area, one-third is occupied by dense, mysterious, tropical forests, where elephants, leopards,

[1] The colony's budget accounts for 45 million francs in taxes of all kinds.

apes and powerful pythons are born and die. In the shade of the slightly thinned forest giants, on a virgin soil fertilized throughout the ages by Nature, the cocoa, coffee and cola trees grow and yield abundant harvests with almost bewildering swiftness. One meets with small and large plantations of these trees not only in the concessions belonging to Europeans, but even around the little native huts buried deeply in the forest.

According to the estimates of Dr. A. Chevalier and M. Bertin, this fabulous tropical forest contains 350 kinds merely of trees which grow to large dimensions. Of these about forty kinds have commercial importance: mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), "tiama" (*Entadrophragma*), "bosse" (*Trichilis cedrata*), "dabema" (*Piptadenia africana*), "iroko" (*Chlorofora excelsa*), "teli" or "tali" (*Erytrophleum guineense*); these trees have a ready market in Europe and America as raw material for elegant furniture, interior decorations, railway carriages, passenger vessels and artistic cabinet-making. The majority of specimens are enormous, spreading their splendid crowns at a height of 200 feet. During twenty years 500,000 tons of mahogany have been exported from the colony, an amount which represents an insignificant proportion of the 30 million acres of forest.

In addition to mahogany and other valuable woods, the French export other kinds, used in the building of houses and bridges, for railway sleepers, and as material for the manufacture of matches and paper.[2] In its

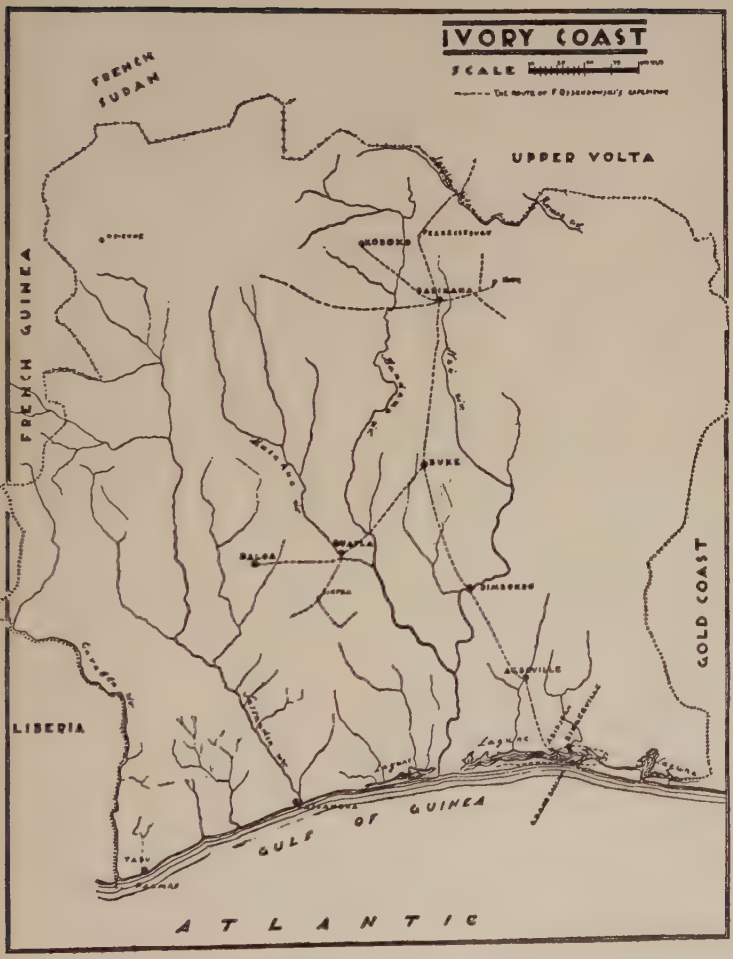
[2] The export of mahogany to France in 1924 was 1,370,000 cubic feet; to other countries, 3,750,000 cubic feet. Other kinds of wood, 940,000 cubic feet.

anxiety for a sound forest husbandry the administration has introduced rational legislation and established experimental stations, which pursue the plan of re-afforesting the sections cleared.

The tropical forest grows with fabulous swiftness. Shooting up from the seed, the young sapling at once raises its leaves towards the sun, vainly seeking it in the dusk of the mother forest. So it begins to struggle for life; and with an outburst of titanic energy it violently endeavours to reach the summits of the surrounding trees as quickly as possible, in order to pierce through their canopy and drink its fill of the life-giving flood of sunlight.

A cleared section of forest can be recognized only by the absence of the magnificent, regular columns of older trees. Here reign instead the thicket and tangled undergrowth. Local sawmills scattered over the country saw the logs into material used on the timber market: beams, boards, ties, and sleepers. In the cleared areas of the forests cocoa plantations belonging to white and black owners are appearing. They began to develop only in 1910, and at that time supplied 7 tons of cocoa for export; in 1924 the amount was 4,300 tons. The administration has the assured hope of raising the export in 1930 to 15,000 tons, by which means one-fifth of the needs of the French market will be covered.

From the spacious forests of oil-palms 8,000 tons of oil and 13,000 tons of palm-kernels are sent to the ports, exported to France, and there worked up into oil used in the manufacture of soap. The undergrowth of cola-trees yields a large quantity of nuts, used as a narcotic


IVORY COAST
SCALE
FRENCH SUDAN
UPPER VOLTA
FRENCH GUINEA
GOLD COAST
LIBERIA
GULF OF GUINEA
ATLANTIC

and curative remedy throughout Africa and exported to Senegal and France to the value of five million francs.[3] In the northern part of the colony cotton is grown which yields a fibre much longer and finer than that of the Sudan and the Volta, and provides a more abundant harvest. The caoutchouc-trees and lianas supply France with 210 tons of this valuable product; the coffee plantations now developing produce a perfect quality coffee, used in the colonies and exported to France.[4] Finally, rice, millet, yams, bananas, sweet potatoes, maize and pea-nuts furnish a plentiful supply of provisions to the population which numbers two million natives and two thousand Europeans.

The work that is being carried on for the gradual and planned upliftment of the natives to the standards of European civilization, for improving the conditions of their life, for the exploitation of the country's natural riches and the swift development of new crops, gives the administration the right to be proud of their work and justifies their hopes that the colony will have an unusually flourishing development.

The Ivory Coast may be regarded as an agriculturist's and forester's country; for judging from the results of geological investigations it is doubtful whether mining enterprises will ever develop. The only metal found and exploited is gold in the valley of the River Bandama.[5]

Our journey through this rich, picturesque, and—despite the heat—pleasant land began from the River

[3] About 322 tons.
[4] One hundred tons.
[5] This is quartz ore. In 1917 154 lb. av. were obtained; in 1923 69 lb. av.

Laraba, which flows through a green savannah, over which are scattered villages of the native circular cane huts huddled together and surrounded with granaries. In the vicinity of every village is a shady grove; huge bunches of maize weighing up to half a ton hang like enormous fruit on the branches of the nearest trees.[6]

There is much traffic on the roads. Crowds of natives pass by, making for the market with millet or with carité-oil oozing from the baskets; cars belonging to Europeans speed by; great haulage tractors roar and puff, carrying goods and timber to Upper Volta, or returning from the colonies situated to the north with a load of local produce dispatched to the port.

Our first halt was made at the Ferkessedugu settlement. Here we learnt that the governor, M. Maurice Lapalud, had invited us to Badikaha for a hunt. This town is situated at the junction of four trading roads, running to Upper Volta, to the port of Grand Bassam, to the Gold Coast and towards the frontier of Guinea.

In mediaeval Europe a mystic fear attached to cross-roads, for such spots were notoriously dangerous. If they were small side-roads bands of robbers lay in wait in the neighbouring woods, plundering and murdering the travellers. No one ever found the bodies, for the bandits diligently obliterated all traces of their crimes, In such cases it was a question for them not so much of their own impunity and safety as of the "reputation" of the spot where "evil powers" pursued people. This superstitious mysticism made of cross-roads safe places

[6] This is the natives' method of keeping the maize set aside for the next sowing.

. . . for bandits. But when high-roads, along which passed caravans of rich merchants, ran together, the fortified castle of a robber-knight arose at their junction.

The owner of the Badikaha settlement, M. de Chanaud, may be likened to such a knight, although, of course, I use the word in its best sense. He had a large transport enterprise which served the Volta, Guinea, and Ivory Coast colonies, and unquestionably no one could have found a better spot for an undertaking of this kind. When the railway from Buke is continued farther in the direction of the Volta it will pass through Badikaha, where a large area occupied by de Chanaud lies along its road and will have to be purchased from the owner by the administration. For the present de Chanaud does not allow this question to trouble him, and has settled in to good purpose. He has built goods warehouses and workshops for the repair of tractors, and is erecting a weaving-mill. His raw material will be supplied by his agava (sizal) plantations, from the fibre of which plant he will make packing material.

His is an amazing house, quite out of the ordinary—a powerful, circular block built of sheet-iron, with broad windows opening on vaulted rooms which surround a circular internal hall. In the hall are a platform, sofas, fauteuils and shelves for books—all immovable, for they are cast from cement and grow like rocks out of the concrete floor. The circular hall has windows to the height of the second floor, where around the house runs a broad gallery, crowned by a bastion containing a circular chamber.

In all the chambers occupied by the master, by Mme.

de Chanaud and their son, I found only furniture made of concrete. This was true of the owner's office also, not excluding the writing-table, the ash-tray and the ink-stand. Concrete and circularity constitute de Chanaud's ideal—concrete because the termites, spiders and reptiles avoid it; circularity for the sake of the abandoned yet favourite profession of the host; for he used to be a mariner.

Short, stocky, vigorous and resolute, M. de Chanaud, with his horny hands and keen eye, once commanded a fishing schooner catching fish in the north Atlantic close to the American coast. During the war de Chanaud transported munitions and foodstuffs from America to France on his own account, risking a meeting with the enemy submarines.

The owner of Badikaha looked like one of Jack London's heroes. He liked everything to be of a round shape, because it allowed of an exact determination of the central idea and principle. Moreover, he could look out from his house as though it were a captain's bridge in all directions to the horizon, and he could obtain an unobstructed view of everything that passed along the four high roads. Thus he could exploit every detail for the benefit of his fireproof safe, and still more for his flaming and explosive spirit, which was such that the armour-plated secret recess in the concrete wall might well have melted and blown up long since. But fortunately the heat and explosive power remained deeply hidden within the broad, muscular chest of the old sea-wolf.

It should not be imagined that the mariner was afraid

of a storm—not in the least. But like a true and prudent sea-wanderer he did not like to arouse a storm without imperative necessity. As an experienced skipper, who had been bathed in the foam of all the seas, de Chanaud undoubtedly preferred the dog-watch in a good storm to sleep during an ignominious, humiliating drift, when the mainsail and cleaver droop at the masts like drying linen hung in the sun.

The ebullient de Chanaud found in hunting a vent for his uncommon powers. The crania, legs and tusks of elephants, and buffalo and antelope horns witnessed to our host's success. During hunts with him I noticed the exuberance and explosiveness of his character—one so colourful, noble and strong, that involuntarily my imagination wove around him a story rivalling the apparently non-existent types created by Jack London.

When hunting, de Chanaud and I made our way far into the savannah and the dusky wilderness lying along the numerous arms of the River Bandama. At this time of the year herds of large antelopes and elephants were grazing in the sea of green grass, seeking the wild pepper,[7] which evidently they regard as a necessity, for sometimes they make long journeys after this condiment or medicine. In the undergrowth of the bushes lurked beasts of prey; and on the savannah one of my companions observed a rare specimen of the hunting dog (*Lycaon pictus*), an animal like our wolf-hounds.

[7] The wild pepper, pepper liana or red pepper in its wild state grows in large quantities in the Ivory Coast, and particularly in Liberia, which before the founding of the Negro republic was called the "Pepper Coast." At certain periods the elephants seek out the pepper and eat it, following the dictates of instinct.

I spent a great deal of time in the gloom of the enormous trees along the tributaries of the Bandama, being bitten by mosquitoes, tse-tse and horse-flies. I observed the life of the deep, muddy and turbid streams. Sluggish, secretive, but simultaneously eloquent, in their morasses they preserved the deep tracks of elephants' monstrous feet, the smaller holes stamped out by the hoofs of buffaloes (*Bubalis major*), and round impressions made by the paws of hyenas, jackals and civets sinking in the quaggy banks. I sometimes noticed deep, smooth trenches, like drain-pipes squeezed into the soft earth, with a serpentine furrow in the middle of the channel. These were the nocturnal couches of crocodiles, which crawl down to the water along the trenches, scoring them with their serrated tails.

On the savannah monkeys browsed, living on wild fruits which in appearance and taste recall our plums and cherries; at sight of us they fled and quickly vanished among the dense branches of the lofty, tangled trees. From time to time out of the turbid, shaded and languorous water emerged the drowsy head of a large water rat; the terrible, spiked "captain" fish splashed; a branch fell, broken by an animal invisible amid the thicket of leafy jungle—perhaps by a playing monkey, or possibly by a leopard or python lurking for its prey.

De Chanaud loved Nature, and knew it as those never know it who write beautiful and touching descriptions of flowers, butterflies, singing birds, light little clouds. . . . When one night we encamped on the savannah among several carité-trees, lit by a moon that endeavoured to peer into every corner, under every grass-blade and into

the black depths of the undergrowth, we listened to the undying murmur and rustle of the jungle. We heard the quiet foot-falls and muffled breathing of animals prowling quite close to us, allured from afar by the smoke of our dying fire and the appearance of our spectrally glimmering tents.

De Chanaud, resting his head on his hand, was utterly absorbed in listening.

"A snake is creeping through the grass," he whispered. "It is moving quickly; without doubt it is making its escape from red ants. . . . A hyena or jackal has got into those bushes. . . . I know it is standing motionless now and is gazing through the network of branches and leaves in our direction, cautiously pricking up its ears and snuffing. . . . On that little hillock something just twinkled and disappeared as though it had dropped into the ground. It is a 'koba' (large antelope). . . . I saw its track on the savannah to-day. . . . Do you hear that continual murmur—like a light whisper, or the quiet ringing of a pocket-watch? That is the echo of the life of the termites. . . . Somewhere near they have their subterranean tunnel, possibly right underneath us. . . . It is a splendid little creature, the termite. We civilized people, we go into raptures over architects of genius who raise cathedrals shooting up to heaven, while meantime the common mounds of the termite excel our edifices by 6,000 times. What a power! What a range of audacious creative ability! When Eiffel raised his celebrated tower, 155 times higher than an average European, what a stir it caused! But do you see that termite mound? It is a good four yards high, while the architects who

built it do not exceed a quarter of an inch. Doesn't that mean that their edifice is 8,000 times higher than ours, and so calls for much greater admiration than Eiffel's creation? Isn't that so?"

De Chanaud was silent and listened again. From afar a weak, stifled groan floated to us through the congealed, motionless air.

"That is a laughing hyena," my companion whispered. "She has fled a long way off. . . . But the termites are never silent . . . they work continually, indomitably, like inspired creators, and without respite, like galley-slaves. . . . They all work: the queen-mother, who all her life is depositing the embryos of new generations, and after death forces her entire subject population to exert a great effort. For then they abandon their possessions and wander sometimes very far, seeking a new place, a new queen and a new life, struggling for them with other termites, with hordes of ants and hundreds of other enemies. The blind female-workers work; the slaves captured by the warriors work; the armed defenders of the state work: maintaining order, supervising the execution of the plan of works, and punishing the refractory and insurgent natures with death. The unknown geniuses hidden in the grey mass of tiny beings work; the termites work: holding courts and regulating the number and formation of the social classes in the state. . . . A magnificent picture of life—a mysterious symmetry of relationships. . . ."

"Circular?" I remarked jestingly.

"Why, what do you think? Of course it's circular!" he answered with a laugh. "The basis of all mounds is

always circular. For in the centre is the breeding mother who concentrically thrusts out the elder generations to the precipices of death. Behind her are the geniuses, the judges, the directors, the executives, the armed bands, and finally the millions of unseen, labouring beings, refreshed and directed from the centre of a great circle. . . ."

"A similar circularity might be adopted with advantage in their own society," I remarked.

"Yes!" he exclaimed. "But unfortunately that will not come about until nine-tenths of humanity go blind. Eyes are the downfall of society, for they lead to individualism. We see our own personal happiness and we pursue it often by side-paths; our eyes fixed on the blessed vision, we tread on the corpses of our fellows."

Such was de Chanaud. With him I made two very interesting excursions in the neighbourhood of Kong and to ancient Koroko. We travelled to Kong accompanied by a cook! De Chanaud had an unusual sort of cook in any case, for he was descended from the family of almami Sorori, the last king to struggle with France.

The road to Kong was rarely traversed by motor-cars, for Kong may be called the town of death and slow extinction—of death, because Samori put almost the entire population to the sword for their indifference to his struggle for the freedom of the blacks, and scattered the remainder as slaves all over the face of the Sudan. Since this disaster the town has been slowly dying, nor is it being revived by any healthy movement.

Here dwelt followers of the Prophet; but they were exterminated by the bloody, frenetic almami, and their

dust was mingled with the dust of the former powerful kings of the Mandes race, who once ruled over all the Sudan, Guinea, and the other countries of western Africa. Kong was a harbour, a fortress of Islam in the south, a gate leading to the sea. The fortress was destroyed; the gate was closed. The voices of the muezzins, glorifying the name of the Prophet, now no longer arise from within the demolished walls and behind the old gate of Kong, fast closed by its rusty bolts. Moors from Sahel make their way through the jungle to Kong and weep there over the great defeat of the Koran; the former inhabitants of the town also go on pilgrimage to visit the tombs of their ancestors, but they find them not on the earth trampled down by the hoofs of the warriors of the last barbarian king, who dreamed of the glory of the Gan Empire. Samori involuntarily rendered valuable assistance to the white colonists by destroying Mussulman influence on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea and among the forest tribes.

When we drew close to the town our cook, the descendant of Samori, raised his head and dilated his nostrils. Of a certainty he was breathing in the acrid scent of blood still borne on the wind—blood which was poured out by the harsh and vindictive "Mohican" of the black race.

Along the deserted road we met with sing-sing antelopes, buffaloes, small antelopes and flocks of wild chickens of various kinds. As we were returning and saw in the distance the enormous tree which stands right outside M. de Chanaud's house, the cook muttered:

"Almami Samori used to sit there and address his prayers to the fetishes."

And truly, in memory of this custom, on certain days the Negroes crowd the courtyard of my friend's property and pray to the fetishes hidden in the branches of the mighty tree, making offerings to them and dancing their tam-tams. Thither to the shade of the wide-spreading, sky-scraping boughs of the ancient giant the souls of ancestors fly for rest and counsel; among them settles the soul of the tragic Samori, the black king who planned to offer resistance to the power of the white intruders.

From Badikaha a perfect road runs to the north towards a large settlement—almost a town—where are situated the government department for the entire region of Koroko and the residence of the king of the Senufos, the most powerful tribe in the district. As far as the River Bandama stretches an extensive bush, as green as though only just washed by streams of warm rain and caressed by the reviving rays of the sun. On the emerald carpet rise bouquets of wide-spreading, stocky trees: the ntaba,[8] ficuses, tamarinds, mimosas, carité, saba[9] and baobabs,[10] frequently intertwined with caoutchous lianas.

[8] *Sterculia cordifolia,* the sweet fruits of which are sought after by the natives.

[9] A small tree usually found growing on termite mounds and yielding a white caoutchouc, not at present used in commerce.

[10] The Senufos make flour from the fruit of the baobabs and material from the fibre; the negroes throw away the seeds, which explains the abundance of baobabs around abandoned and existing native settlements.

The bush recalls an English park. The traveller and hunter easily crosses this plain, with its short, lush grass; for here one need fear neither treacherous warrens nor sharp stones, such as render the march so difficult in the jungle of Kaarta and the mountains of Futa-Jallon. The ruddy-brown backs of small and large antelopes frequently appeared for an instant on the green ground of the bush. Families of wild "phacochoerinae," or wart-hogs, and the smaller "potamochoerae," or red river-hogs, browsed, pressing aside the undergrowth with their monstrous snouts, wandering in sometimes very numerous herds.[11] Monkeys leapt and clambered the trees, crossing the plain and disappearing into the bushes entangled and swathed with a network of climbing plants. Birds of various kinds, from the large bustard and Pharoah's chicken to the "metal" thrush, glittering like a little crystal ball changing colours in the sun, reigned omnipotent.

Two Senufo villages, surrounded with fields of millet, cotton and yams, had all the aspect of settlements belonging to affluent people assured of the morrow.

The road crossed the Bandama at the half-way point by a permanent wooden bridge which the French authorities have hung across the river. From the bridge one could see the pools of the river, with schools of large fish swimming momently to the surface. Beyond the river the landscape suddenly changed. Little elevations began, while beyond them was a distinctly undulating

[11] *Potamochoerus penicillatus.* The zoologist, Dr. Maclaud, met herds numbering 200 head of these boars, with their small but sharp tusks, on the River Kogon.

district. The bush retreated far from the road, which in many places was lined with handsome mango-trees laden with ripe fruit. On the spots where only recently had reigned the virgin bush, ploughed earth awaiting the sower was blackening. Here and there were fields with the dark stalks and tufts of cotton-plants still standing.

The fields came to an end by the first huts of Koroko. The large settlement is lost among orange, citron and mango-trees. The spacious and prosperous-looking huts contain opulent inhabitants, for they are agriculturists and merchants combined, selling cotton, caoutchouc and vegetables to the European firms which have their warehouses here. The natives also carry their millet to Buke, where they sell it to the labourers who are building the railway running to the north in the direction of Upper Volta. Among the long and low native houses a three-storied, black, powerful and sombre building, built of termite earth, strikes the eye. It is inhabited by the "king" of the Senufos, Gpon Kulibali, who possesses no authority whatever but has much influence over the population as a priest and, it seems, as a quack magician.

The French authorities take advantage of this fact, and are making use of Kulibali to establish their authority in the country. For that matter such a method was necessary some dozen or so years ago, but now all the tribes of the coast have realized the purport of the French policy, and are exerting their powers and enterprise to obtain as much profit as possible from the fields and from the exploitation of the jungle.

To the left of the road we perceived some clean little houses, which constituted the administrator's residence.

Fruit trees and flowering plants supplied a pleasant, refreshing shade. We called on the administrator and afterwards paid a visit to his assistant, M. Paolini—a Corsican, I think. Between us Poles and Paolini bonds of sympathy were established at once. But that is easy to understand, for Paolini's brother served in our army during the Bolshevik invasion, was wounded at Radzymin, and returned to France with a Polish wife!

In pleasant gossip with the Paolinis the time passed unnoticed, yet we still had to make an expedition into the town and to visit the "king." So we drove through the animated, crowded streets, admiring the splendid type of women, among them several almost golden blondes and ruddy beauties with shapely noses and fine lips. These are Anglo-Negro mulattoes. The dark-haired Portuguese, Spaniards and French do not compromise themselves so obviously as do the British. They have even imbued the mulattoes with their innate loftiness and sense of superiority, for the latter stare haughtily and with a certain contempt at the ant-hill of completely black neighbours and relatives.

We drew up before the king's palace. The general character of its architecture was Sudanese, the style Saharan. As I looked at its massive dark-grey walls, with their blind recesses, their arrowy niches, their powerful semi-columns supporting the pediment over the entrance, at the dark and mysterious openings of the narrow windows, I was conscious of an atmosphere of profound mediaevalism. Raising my gaze to the top story, I was reminded of something from the palace of the Doges in Venice. A balustrade nine feet high, ending with acute

triangular turrets like tongues of flame, with pendant bunches of "duduma" grass for ornament, runs around the palace, concealing from the inquisitive eye a terrace arranged on the roof.

The king came out to meet us. A powerful fifty-year-old man, with prominent Negro features and an amiable face, Gpon Kulibali was attired in a violet velvet robe with broad sleeves and in an embroidered red cap; on his bare feet he was wearing golden slippers of soft leather.

He conducted us to the interior of his residence. On the ground-floor was a dark, covered verandah, crowded with women and children and filled with the smoke of frying carité-oil and meat; then came a dusky square room, where the entire furniture consisted of a broad, iron bedstead, a balaphone hanging on the wall and a child's tram-car standing in the corner—a present from some merchant to the royal children.

From this room we passed to the stairs—narrow, uneven, winding, full of dark passages and unexpected turns and zigzags. In several places were little narrow windows. I glanced through them; they were windows for providing light to the internal apartments of the palace: several lofty rooms, with mats, carpets, mattresses and blankets scattered everywhere. Some dirty hand-woven stuffs hung from the ceilings, a few utensils were standing on wooden shelves. It was as clamorous and swarming as a beehive, for they were the "chambers" belonging to King Kulibali's hundred wives.

I know not whether the number given to me is exact, but I must confirm the fact that multitudes of wives

spread all over the interior of the palace, poured along the corridors, roved through the courtyard, worked in the kitchen, milked the cows and goats, and two with saucy smiles were making something on a real sewing-machine. Among the skeleton-like old women I observed younger ones terribly corpulent and unwieldy, and some quite young—naked, merry and unashamed, clapping their hands and singing with piercing voices. Here children also ran, crawled, raised a din and rent the heaven, white lambs bleated, and sheep tied to hooks driven into the walls accompanied them in a mournful tone.

Through the windows came whiffs of stuffy, sweltering atmosphere, pungent with the acrid oil covering the hair and bodies of the women, with perspiration, and some kind of peppery food. I was relieved when the endlessly winding stairs led me at last to an outer window. A blue-gold stream of light poured through it; and when I gazed below I saw all Koroko lying at the foot of the palace, and the savannah with its black plumes of trees; I saw the road running to the horizon as straight as an arrow, leading through Odienne to Guinea.

At last we had made our way to the roof of the palace. Here we met Kulibali's two brothers: sleepy, fat, and seemingly tipsy young fellows, with very dignified and proud movements and carriage. Through the high balustrade, with its vari-shaped openings all around the terrace, we could admire the truly beautiful and very expansive landscape.

I watched the "king" attentively. Unquestionably he must have had sorrowful thoughts, for as he gazed across

this huge area of fields, forests and village he must have reminded himself that the days of the royal authority belonging to the descendants of his ancestor, Nenki, whom God Himself had created, had passed for ever. Nenki's distant grandson was now one of the officials of the white governors, who fastened medals with coloured ribbons to his breast.

But perhaps Gpon Kulibali was never troubled by such thoughts at all, for he had much trouble and anxiety in feeding his hundred wives, his thirty-five children, and a numerous horde of palace rapscallions. The poor wretch had to rack his brains over the problem of how to obtain sufficient reserves of grain and meat from his fields, and caoutchouc, cotton, carité and sumbara from the jungle to exchange for the paper francs necessary in order to purchase material, beads, bracelets and rings for those wives who had youthful, naked, shameless bodies.

We went down again and visited the empty rooms. Here and there a hand-made carpet was flung down; against one wall stood a cheap French buffet; from a ceiling an oil-lamp was hanging which never was and never will be lit, for the bottom of the oil reservoir had been knocked out and the glass was smashed.

Kulibali's ancestors had built a palace of termite earth and unwittingly raised . . . a termite mound: an enormous mound full of gloomy galleries, recesses, subterranean tunnels, dusty chambers and hidden storerooms. In certain deep recesses, where, together with hidden treasures and relics, were preserved the fetishes of the royal dynasty, one undoubtedly could have found an entire cemetery, in which reposed the remains of the

former rulers and members of the present king's family.

A tiny Negro, as black as ebony, came across the grounds to my wife, staring at her with bold, somewhat astonished, pleasant little eyes. My wife took him by the hand and began to fondle his grave little mouth. The king was very flattered by her action for it appeared that it was his son by the wife he had loved most.

Kulibali wished to entertain us, so he gave a sign with his hand. Several lads came running out of the palace into the street, carrying chairs for us. We sat down, surrounded by a crowd of gaping Negroes; after a moment musicians appeared, and several balaphonists began a concert. On the walls and terraces of the smaller houses a host of royal spouses immediately blossomed forth: old, obese, and young, sometimes very attractive, especially when they had golden hair and quite light-coloured eyes.

The concert lasted for some time, which I spent in gazing at the heavy façade of the palace, at the pediment and the entrance pillars. Raising my eyes to the handsome balustrade of the upper terrace, I reminded myself that this edifice stood on land where recently cannibalism had existed and Samori had stormed, in which a god "who had departed for ever" had manifested his creative power, where bows and poisoned arrows are in use, slavery is prevalent and people offer sacrifices before monstrous wooden fetishes.

Whence, then, had arisen this need of an artistic and really powerful and imposing ornamentation and architecture among these primitive peoples whose mind was

still in the process of a very slow and inherent physiological and psychical development?

I recalled all the designs painted and carved on clay pots, on calabashes, on wooden tables, on couches, and the doors and walls of huts—so naïve, simple, and so well known to me, already seen elsewhere! I remembered seeing exactly similar forms and designs to those I had found on the clay pots and platters of the Sussu, Malinki, and Senufo tribes on the vessels deriving from the neolithic epoch, and also on Egyptian articles dating from pre-dynastic times. Patterns for mats woven of fibre, raffia and "duduma" are to be found on excavated Egyptian carvings and weavings and those originating from Elam,[12] Palestine and Armenia.

And those conical bastions must be little flames of fire: the sun-barque, found among all peoples irrespective of whether their fatherland was in the north, such as Scandinavia and the Asiatic coast of the Okhotsk Sea, or in the south, such as New Guinea or India. They are vestiges of the Babylonian cult of Baal of Nippur, Marduk of Babylon.

However, the sun is not regarded as a good god by the Negroes, so why do all the natives from the Sahara to the Ivory Coast erect symbols of his power? I think that these symbols are survivals of the cult of the sun-destroyer, the kinsman to Nergal of the Babylonian Olympus. His comrades were and are heat, drought, invasions, wars and epidemics. The Babylonian Nergal passed

[12] A State once neighbouring with Chaldea, to the east of the Lower Tigris.

into the religion of Phoenicia under the name of Baal-zebub. He became the Philistine god of the burning, destroying sun, giving birth to injurious insects. The flaming tongues—the symbol of the burning sun—passed into the architecture, carvings and drawings of prehistoric and historic peoples. And what race had greater right to use these symbols—amulets against the destructive power of the sun—than the Negroes, who groan in the clutches of their own Nergal, their own Baal-zebub?

So possibly I saw these very amulets on Kulibali's balustrade. Or possibly the ancient Hyksos—Sussus—the people of the serpent, or the southern Egyptians brought these elements of the sun-god Ra here during their wanderings, and they remained, not as the recognition of a divinity, but as a memorial of the valiant peoples from the tribe of kings.

For in Africa everything has been a wanderer. Races, peoples, tribes, customs, blood and gods have all wandered into this land from the north and the east. . . . Then surely it is feasible that the drawings and architecture may have come here from the Tigris and the Euphrates and from the valley of the Nile?

The sun was already declining towards the west when we drove away from Koroko, returning by the road we had come. On the plain close to the numerous villages, and at the very edge of the road, stood small groups of lofty old trees, like temples built of dark jade. And, indeed, they were temples.

These groves, planted by the hand of long-dead ancestors, surround small, circular patches of earth, over which reigns everlasting twilight. The dark canopy of

the interlaced, full-grown branches and the splendid leafy crowns do not allow the rays of the noonday sun to penetrate; the young trees and thicket of tamarind undergrowth, and the mantling lianas around the powerful columns of the ancients defend the interior of the temple from the joyous rays of light, and from the valedictory glimmers of the melancholy dusk.

These are lairs where, "working in the shade," the magicians, the priests of a secret ritual, find their element in the everlasting twilight of the grey old trees. On moonlight nights they gather the elders around them, telling hoary, decrepit legends; they judge the affairs of the people and carry prayers collectively and in secret to the shades of ancestors and to the invisible divinities. When the sun is flaming at its fiercest the magicians and priests came here surrounded by the youth, to confirm them in the ancient customs and to pass on the memory of the glorious, great men of the tribe and of its mysterious forefathers.[13]

The cupola'd trees, the columns of trunks, the roof-beams of branches, the leafy thatch and the walls of bushes and lianas form a temple of Earth, the goddess-protectress; she is a goddess with a soul larger than her swarthy breast, and more powerful, for it can remain in its body and simultaneously go on distant wanderings to her consort, the moon, and to her flaming, sunny sister.

[13] I have taken these particulars from an unpublished monograph by a very eminent expert on western Africa, the former governor, Professor Maurice Delafosse—a work kindly lent to me by the assistant administrator of Koroko, M. Paolini, to whom I express my gratitude.

The sacred groves scattered over the face of the jungle and among the clearings of the fields are regarded with veneration and fear; for there in the dusk of the little huts repose the fetishes of the tribe, of the secret associations, clans, castes and families.

Rites and mysteries take place there of which the white man learns only accidentally. From time to time in the temples of Earth, in the presence of the invisible shades of ancestors, the former traditions are revived, and the ancient myths throw off the dust and must of oblivion.

Under the dark, unechoing canopy of the trees the lips of the elders, priests and magicians whisper words inherited from their forefathers; and the ears of the youth avidly absorb the moving, simple recollections. The Senufos do not allow neighbours from the castes of curriers, tailors or embroiderers to come here, for their ancestors are not among the shades reposing in the boughs of the sacred trees. These castes derive from other tribes. On the other hand, the people bearing the name Sekongo occupy first place, for they have retained their smith-craft in the family for ages. By their side sit the artist "griots," who rejoice the living and the shades of the dead with music and song, dancing and mirth.

The gathering listens attentively to the words of the old priest of Earth, the great doctor and soothsayer, when he lifts his eyes to heaven and in a quiet tone half-speaks, half-dreams aloud.

"High above, far along, and deep below went the great Kuluikieri, God and Creator. His every step created earth; His glance cast before Him created stars; His anxieties, the sun; His gladness, the moon; His

tears, the sea; His thought, the insects, birds, animals and—men. When Kuluikieri had done all this He threw over His creations the blue cloak of heaven, hid Himself behind it for ever, and rested. He does not see the world He created; He does not hear the sound of the thunders, the roar of the waves . . . or our prayers. . . .

"By His thought God created on our earth the father of all the Senufos and called him Nenki; and Nenki founded Koroko [14] and extended his kingdom to Kong and beyond. Later other tribes came, and together with them our rulers continually extended the confines of the state towards the north and west. . . . Among the kings were valiant and strenuous warriors and wise teachers of the people, who compelled them to labour in the fields and to gather the abundant harvest; there were hunters of elephants and distinguished merchants who sent goods in all four directions; there were powerful magicians and miraculous doctors; there were bards who sang the glorious deeds of the Senufo-Sienemans . . .[15]

"After death the souls of our rulers sought their 'beasts' [16] in order to take up their abode in them. Yet they were not hyenas or panthers or boars, but always a lion! When the end of his life approached, the liberated soul of the king entered the womb of a new mother, who bare a new ruler.

"There was King Mango-Mamadu, who had for wife

[14] Koroko was founded only in the fourteenth century, but the legend had endued it with the spell of a fabulous antiquity, which, of course, was necessary to the reigning dynasties, to whom this spell was transferred.

[15] The Senufos call themselves Sieneman.

[16] Totems.

the valiant Sortonassi, daughter of the almami Samori. . . . He departed far from us . . . into exile . . . to the town of the Prophet, Timbuktu, where the blast of the desert drives up clouds of yellow sand. . . . There was King Moriba, who wished to restore the ruined country, but the whites tore him away. . . . Lanteni Sidiki and Ibrahim reigned over us, but they also departed. . . ."

Long until the dusk the unemotional voice of the elder ascends as evenly as the wave of a slow-flowing forest stream, arousing no echo among the columns and under the canopy of boughs, yet so forceful that the eyes of the seated youth burn and their hearts beat aloud. . . .

I passed among the trees of one of these groves, penetrating to the central glade. The soft earth deadened my steps when the shade of the natural temple engulfed me; such a silence reigned that I heard the beating of my own heart, the circulation of the blood in my veins, and hardly apprehensible rustles. . . .

My gaze fell on a large flat stone, with the marks of knives sharpened on it and with black stains from the blood of sacrificial birds. Only birds. . . .? The earth-mother, the earth-goddess frequently demanded other sacrifices, in order that through blood a union of the souls of humans with the gods might be achieved.

Beneath the straw thatches of the little huts stood rows of fetishes. Small and large, well-formed and shapeless, singular and monstrous—of stone, mud, wood and bone—they gazed at me with unwinking eyes, knowing yet hiding the truth: gazed stubbornly, provokingly and mysteriously. . . . By them stood platters once filled with

millet, rice, salt and drink. The food had long since been consumed by the rats and palm squirrels or pecked by the birds; the drink had been drunk up by the breath of the sun floating hither.

The eyes of the fetishes were set mockingly, but the enigma remained hidden. I left the shade of the temple, and gulped down the burning air overflowing with the freedom and gladness of the savannah; I looked with pity at the broken undergrowth, the tamarinds, latanias, and "nete." [17] In my heart I was mortified that they had not unveiled for me the secret of the fetishes, which saw all and hid all in their unwinking pupils of stone, mud and bone. . . .

Long I stood and gazed. . . . I watched the golden shield of the sun as it began to turn ruddy; it rolled and declined towards the west, became bloated with living blood and wearily dropped to the distant edge of the earth, driving into her like a sharp, brazen disc pressed by a mighty hand, and burying itself in her swarthy, furrowed breast. The reflected glitter of spurting blood played long on the edges of the black cloud-masses, fled to the summits of the trees, and suddenly faded. . . . Then violet and blue shadows slipped out from among the branches of the sacred groves; but when the drowsy birds had ceased their last twittering, they withdrew fearfully. . . .

The moment had come when it is neither day nor night, when everything loses its density and appears to be flat, like landscapes cut out of a black sheet and fastened with black nails on the greyish, translucent, misty,

[17] A tree yielding the sweet juice—sumbara.

spaceless plain. It lasted but one moment; for swiftly arrived the fleet courier of night, and with sombre wings gathered the remaining light and blew it away . . . until dawn. . . .

But in that brief moment of half-light without clarity and half-dusk without depth I perceived the form of a native. He was going, or rather he was stealing, towards the temple, carrying a little sacrificial platter carefully in his hands. He passed beneath the overhanging branches of the narrow entrance and disappeared in the gloom. He did not emerge again for a long time, so long that I drove away without awaiting his return. Our car rattled and grumbled, and in its sounds I seemed to hear the songs of the Cenufos, the shouts and dances of the "griots," the echoes of prayers. . . .

I lean back in my seat, and through my mind pass strange, mysterious pictures. I see a procession of people in white attire carrying on a litter the body of a youth swathed in a white cloak. . . . Behind the procession follows a crowd with "griots" at its head. I hear the sounds of funeral songs, the echoes of music and the trampling of dancers. . . . In the dust above the crowd float the fetishes carried by the priests and elders—whole hosts of fetishes. In the distant jungle close to a swift stream they bury the youth . . . sacrifices are made . . . and they leave the son in the womb of Mother Earth. . . .

The crowd departs and paces gravely back to the settlement. No one awaits it with gifts, no one welcomes it with the usual salutation, for the people are returning after yielding to Earth the body of the dead. Only

one old priest takes farewell of one of the villagers with the strange words:

"Thy son has united with Earth and has united us with Her. Glory to thy family for the great sacrifice!"

Again I think I see a sacred grove; a temple of Earth. By the sacrificial stone stand priests and magicians. . . . I see them . . . I hear the rustle of their gowns, the sound of their stentorious breath; I hear the words of the high-priest:

"Earth is angry. . . . She has cast locusts into the fields . . . she has sent diseases on man. . . . Not for many days has Earth been given the blood of her sons to drink; she demands a sacrifice . . . We must appease the angered. . . ."

The heads bend towards one another; they look one another inquiringly in the eyes; at times an abrupt whisper falls and is lost in the dusk of the trees. They depart, disperse in various directions. In the grove only the fetishes are left, vigilant and motionless. . . . The bats hiss, the cicadas play, the rats grate their teeth.

I see the jungle, and through it presses a crowd of youngsters. They walk in a group and listen to the words of the magician. He speaks with inspired voice, this "man working in the shade":

"We walk together through part of our earth. . . . We see beautiful Nature—the work of the old God who long since departed for ever. Understand the purpose of existence of every bush, the strength of often the smallest grass-blade, the habits of the free beasts, the speech of the birds. When you return to the village it will hap-

pen according to custom, and you will be numbered among the mature men of the tribe. . . ." [18]

For a long time the magician explains and counsels; he discourses on the nature of love and of woman, of life and death; he explains how the dispensations of the gods govern love and death, how by the will of the fetishes human laws have contained in iron bands the whole life of man and the subjection of woman. . . .

But when the night falls, and wearied with the road the youths are sleeping a deep sleep, the magician awakens one on whom his eyes have rested continually, and whispers to him of the disasters afflicting the tribe; while tears steam from the youth's eyes and despair appears on his face. . . .

"Listen!" the magician whispers in his ear. "Dedicate thyself . . . give thy blood in sacrifice to Earth and save thy brothers. . . . The fetishes of thy father will become the gods of the tribe, and thy name will pass from family to family. . . . Thy soul will abide for ever in the region of happiness."

"I am afraid," the condemned youth answers, shuddering and full of a hopeless yearning. "I am afraid with a great fear. . . ."

"Go now—go!" the magician says. "Rest, and remain at peace!"

The company of youngsters wanders many days through the jungle, conducted by the magician. He does not let the terrified youth from his sight. He gives him

[18] Either before or after circumcision the young men of certain tribes make a long expedition through the country. The magician accompanying them establishes them in the tribal traditions, beliefs, superstitions and quackeries, and instructs them how they are to live when they become men, fathers and elders.

fruits when he is hungry and juicy grasses when thirst torments him. . . . The youth begins to weaken, to grow thin, his blood rushes to his throat, until he falls in a swoon, already embraced by the arms of death. . . ."

Nevertheless they carry him to the sacred grove, and all depart, leaving him alone with the fetishes and with the shades of his fathers; for they can restore him to health. . . . At night the elders and magicians come from all directions. The high-priest listens to see whether the heart still beats in the youngster's breast, whether a light flutter of breath shakes the flame of the little oil-lamp.

They surround him in a ring. The words of impassioned and sombre prayers fall in the dusk of the temple and die away without echo. Those standing behind the priests rise on tip-toe and gaze at them across shoulders and heads. . . . The breasts respire heavily and the breath bursts hoarsely from their throats. . . .

At midnight all is finished . . . Platters of the fresh atonement are placed before the fetishes . . . Around the sacrificial stone the earth given to drink of hot blood is strewn with green carité leaves. . . . On the stone a fire begins to flame, stirred by the high-priest. . . . At its side lies the terrified youth in a white cloak . . . motionless . . . lifeless. . . .

When the sun appears on the far side of the earth, stabbing it with a million golden shafts, the sounds and songs of mourning arise; the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages come running; and the funeral takes place . . . a solemn ceremonial full of concentration and mystery.

A new fetish arrives at the sacred grove . . . a fresh name passes into the songs of the "griots," the stories of the bards, the talk of the people. . . .

I saw these pictures in the shades entangled in the undergrowth of the groves, in the dust-cloud that sped behind our car, in the eyes of the Senufo elders, in the symbols carved in the sacrificial trays. . . . I heard the speech and the prayers of the Negro priests floating towards me from the startled crowns of the trees, from the faint rustle of the grass surrounding the sacrificial stone, and from the speechless fetishes, from which arose incomprehensible rustles, murmurs and gnashings. . . .

Now that the ploughshare is turning over clod after clod of the virgin soil around the sacred groves, now that motor-cars speed past with a roar and the white invaders are already drawing up the plans of a railway which is to cross that country, possibly in the temples of Earth the amazed and angry fetishes look in vain for further sacrifices. Possibly. . . .

But the shades and the murmurs of the groves avow that these things have been. . . .

CHAPTER TWENTY

ON THE TRAIL OF ELEPHANTS

IN the triangle lying between Buke, Sinfra and Daloa stretches a rarely visited savannah, interspersed with broad belts of virgin forest. Here the white man's axe works only along the roads, cutting down trees for bridges, gutters, and the reinforcing of ditches. In this region we spent two weeks.

Our stay in Badikaha might have been greatly extended but for the arrival of the well-known colonial official and famous hunter, M. Maurice Burger, who came to invite us to a hunt in the Buaflé region.

Apart from this, the rainy season was approaching. Already several tornadoes had raged over the savannah, shaking the enormous trees, and flooding the vicinity with streams of tepid water which poured down with a pattering and a splashing from the black, low-hanging clouds. All the signs indicated that Africa was rather brusquely requesting us to cross the threshold of her continent. We took the hint, and hastened with our visits to other districts of the Ivory Coast.

So we arrived at Buke, a populous, well-built little town, with a handsome residence for the administrator, M. Gustave de Kutuli. There are also a railway running

to the ocean, a club, a school, a hospital, numerous villas belonging to the officials and colonists, and the buildings of trading firms. All the edifices stand along boulevards lined with orange, mango, citron, mandarin and the "flamboyant" trees, which blossom with beautiful flaming-red flowers; on the boulevards we were shown "crepitans" trees, dropping ripe fruit which burst like little bombs and scattered their seeds around over a large area.

Immediately we entered the garden surrounding the administrator's house ants fell on me and bit mercilessly. They were large insects, as red as though bloated with blood. We looked for their nests, and found a little sack, skilfully made from several mandarin-tree leaves and filled with these spiteful rogues. They were at once placed in a jar of ether for their banditry.

The three days spent in Buke will never be erased from our memory. We met several very friendly people, including the administrator himself. His father was for a long time the French consul-general in Petersburg, where he knew many members of the Polish colony. The administrator introduced us to the very charming and cultured Gonfréville family, who own the only cotton-mill in these colonies.

One day we visited an exhibition of native cotton, which is produced in large quantities in the Buke area, the cotton fibre reaching 1¼ inches in length, and so usable in any weaving-mill. Crowds of natives filled the exhibition ground with their baskets and bales of snow-white cotton. The officials and governmental agricultural inspectors examined it and awarded prizes.

The local cotton is bought by merchants from Grand Bassam as well as by the Gonfréville mill. Thanks to the latter the entire district has become devoted to peasant industries; the Negroes clean the cotton and make yarn, dyeing it red, blue and yellow, and selling the finished product to the mill. At present the Gonfrévilles can satisfy the needs only of Buke and the inhabitants in the vicinity, but they are thinking of enlarging their works.

The native women, stocky and with strong, healthy bodies, wear coloured but discreetly tinted cloaks, and kerchiefs on their heads over their quite long, frizzy hair. The cloaks, however, do not always conceal their bodies, which shine with carité-oil, and are ornamented with cicatrices on the abdomen, shoulders and breasts, and with heavy bracelets of ivory, brass and bronze on their arms and legs. Their cheeks are tattooed with symmetrical circles.

The men drape themselves picturesquely in togas, and when seen at a distance give the impression of ancient Romans going to the forum of their city. Only the black faces with three deep scars on the cheeks tell that they are "barbarians," whose ancestors the citizens of all-powerful Rome carried off to be their slaves, gladiators and amphitheatre attendants. The population mainly belongs to the very numerous Baule tribe. One may also come across the naked inhabitants of the eastern section of the district, the Agni natives, who are akin both to the Baules and to the Ashantee tribe.

As I observed the cicatrices on the bodies of the Negroes from the great Agni-Ashantee family, the long scars and rings on the cheeks, the wavy lines and fine

stars on the breasts and abdomens, I reflected that probably these were symbols of the sun, the vestiges of a cult brought by invaders from the east. In order to confirm this theory I wished to obtain some more definite proof. But, as usual, conversations with the natives yielded no results whatever.

"The elder people did so, and so we do the same!" was always the answer.

Then I began to examine the various manufactures of the Baules and Agnis: the hunting helmets, the masks of the magicians, the women's jewels, the carved wooden stools and tables, the weights used in weighing the gold-dust, the bows and quivers. The chief *motifs* of the drawings and carvings were a triangular flame like that on the palace of Gpon Kulibali in Koroko, an undulating line, a figure recalling the Egyptian "sun-boat" and . . . a swastika!

It seems to me that here we have a sufficiently convincing proof of the derivation of all these emblems from the sun-cult. In ancient India the swastika was the emblem of the sun. It was the sign of the sun as fire and also fire itself, or the symbol of the god Agni, who was the messenger of other gods, the guardian of home life, the protector against demons, and finally, the god who conducted human souls to the regions of eternal repose. From India the swastika passed to Assyria and Babylon, and thence on to the west; until we meet the swastika, the undulating sun-line and the triangular flame in Armenia and the Russian Caucasus. With Attila and the Tartar descendants of Ghengiz-Khan this sign wandered on to the west, to our Tatra (Carpathian) mountains,

where the mountaineers carve it on their houses and alpenstocks, and to the Danube valley.

The divinity of the Agni Negroes is Gye, the god with the horned head of a bull. This clearly indicates the influence of Egypt, where Apis was dedicated to the sun, Ra.

By what roads did the sun-myth arrive here? Did it come independently from the east, which so far as topography is concerned is quite possible? Or was it brought here by emigrants from Asia and Egypt wandering down from the north, subduing the primitive inhabitants and driving them continually farther and farther to the south into the virgin forests around the coast of the Gulf of Guinea? How did they come to establish the sun-cult among the black races? Was it the result of slavery, or of inter-breeding?

I found no answer to these questions, either on the naked bodies of the Baule and Agni Negroes, or in the circles on the women's faces or the scars on the cheeks of the men; and even the swastika cut on the bronze bracelet of the beautiful, smiling Kobla Lo remained an enigma.

From de Kutuli's residence we travelled by car some 108 miles to Bauflé, where Burger was already waiting for us. We established ourselves for the time being in the house made ready for us by the administrator, M. Felix Pernot, and rode by a side-track to the bush.

The landscape changed but little, only we met more frequently with long rows of trees and dense bushes growing on the banks of numerous streams. These ran down a slight incline towards the River Bandama, which

here forks into the Black and the White Bandama. The savannah had the same aspect as everywhere else on the Ivory Coast: long, luscious grass, small groves of carités, sometimes baobabs and groups of fan-leaved palms. On the plain herds of "sons," "sing-sings," [1] various smaller antelopes and occasionally a pair of the powerful "dyinka" [2] were grazing. Everywhere we met with old and fresh tracks of buffaloes, trees broken down by elephants, and the deep circular impressions of their feet in the ground. Among the bushes wild hens were running and feeding, the striped tail of a genet twinkled, and in the distance a suspicious, cowardly, watchful jackal stole along like a fleeting shadow.

Fish splashed in the rivers and streams, and tortoises basking on the stones dropped noisily into the water. In the channels of the Bandama's smaller tributaries glittered white quartz boulders; some of them were marked with the green spots which rejoice the heart of the Siberian gold prospector.

In the dark twilight of the river banks large and repulsive centipedes—Juluses and Scolopendrae—sometimes dropped on to one, and if they observed the slightest movement of the body they would bite and infect with poison. Black scorpions, eight inches long, and the smaller but still more noxious grey scorpions, thrust their pincers out of the sand. Among the branches the powerful Mygale spiders lurked in wait for their prey; they can kill not only small birds, but even the large green

[1] *Cobus cole*, called "son" by the Negroes; *Cobus defassa*, called "sing-sing" by the Negroes.
[2] *Otlas derbyantes*.

pigeon, a dog, or a cat—as the local people declare. Large and round crab-spiders like a sixpenny-piece appeared on the roads after sunset and crawled into the houses, sometimes biting painfully. They are strange and awesome creatures, with their hard scale-armour and two sensitive little horns, like antennae. Experts declare that the crab-spiders are gloomy myops, and courageous and merciless preyers. Various kinds of snakes hid in the undergrowth, among them the green "ananas" snake, swift in its movements and over six feet long. In the open and sandy places lurked poisonous vipers. Over water and in the shade of the lofty trees swarmed tse-tse flies, mosquitoes, and clouds of stinging horse-flies.

We sped past a village in which soon after the French occupation of the colony the Negroes killed an officer; and his sergeant ordered his body to be cut into pieces, in order to have it put into biscuit-tins and carried to the camp, where the murdered man was buried with military honours. This occurred not so very long ago, and what changes have taken place since then! The population, now quite peaceable and submissive in their attitude, labour industriously in the fields and the jungle. A white child might travel safely through the district without any protection!

We spent the whole of our stay in the Bauflé region among these simple, primitive, pliable people, hunting in the vicinity of Bauflé and around Daloa and Sinfra.

It is a veritable hunter's paradise! The graceful bodies of antelopes no longer attract, for almost everywhere on the ground one can perceive the signs of bigger game. I refer to the circular footprints left by the buffa-

loes, the deep holes pressed out by elephants' legs as thick as telegraph poles, or the pitted paths stamped out by the hippopotami when emerging from their river pools and making into the jungle for food.

Burger guided us after these larger beasts, and my heart beat at the thought that I should meet these princes of the jungle eye to eye. I found every animal in which I was interested except elephants. Only once was I at close quarters with one of these giants, but we tracked him through such dense bush and morasses that he heard us and made off with extraordinary speed. The trackers followed his track the whole day, but he tore on and on, and escaped us in the heart of the forest, where at this season of the year his fellows were hiding. Here, almost sewn into the thicket of bushes, standing up to the belly in some little lake, the elephants drench themselves with water and lazily chew the red pepper pods.

There is no hope of getting near to them in this jungle, for they have perfect guards. Around the drove of elephants swarm birds, sitting on their backs and pecking ticks and other parasites from their stout hides. The elephant's sincerest friends are the white heron and a small grey bird whose name is unknown to me. When this personal bodyguard of the monarchs of the jungle hear or see a man they set up such a clamour that it would raise the dead from their graves, not to mention a watchful elephant!

The always scrupulous and conscientious German zoölogists distinguish five kinds of elephants in these latitudes. However, this involves such detailed classification that the differences between them are not observable with-

out special investigation. The local hunters barely recognize two varieties, the large dark-grey and the smaller reddish-brown elephant. The "red" elephants are notorious for their spitefulness, and not only do not retreat before a man, but themselves seek out their enemy and attack him.

Such experienced hunters as de Chanaud and Burger assured me that elephants have a distinct sense of obligation in regard to the herd. If one of them is wounded and is too weak to hide from his enemies, others come at his bellow, raise him and carry him off.

This was confirmed to me by a hunter of the Guro tribe. He was a brave tracker and elephant-hunter, as witnessed his helmet, adorned with magical "cors" and a white horse-tail. During his experience this man had seen several such cases of elephants rescuing a fellow which had been wounded and rendered helpless. He had known it to happen once when an elephant, passing along a track, stepped on a stone connected by a line with a block of wood with a spike embedded in it hung high up in a tree.[3] Breaking away, the block dropped and buried the long, broad spike in the animal's neck. The elephant fell, and would unquestionably have been killed with spears and arrows but for its fellows, who carried the wounded beast away from the spot.

The African elephant is a thoroughly savage animal, and it rarely submits to the will of man. If wounded but not deprived of the possibility of movement, it audaciously and madly charges, bellowing frightfully and running with upraised trunk and turned-up tail, with its lit-

[3] The form of trap set for the elephant by the natives.

tle besom of wiry hairs at the end. On overtaking the enemy it seizes him with its trunk and throws him high into the air. When the man falls the elephant tramples on him, and then pins him to the earth with his tusks.

Yet the elephant is a true martyr, for it is eaten alive by various parasites; and in particular huge grey ticks sometimes drive it insane.

At the season when we were hunting in the savannah on the western bank of the Bandama the elephants had not yet arrived. They remained more to the south and in Liberia, hidden in inaccessible forests and keeping to the vicinity of morasses; so it was merely our misfortune that we did not track down any elephants. If only one of these giants had passed across the savannah undoubtedly we should have caught him, for with us we had two such trackers as Burger and his huntsman, the Negro Konan. For me Konan will always remain the ideal tracker. This Baule Negro, sinewy, springy and indefatigable, a magnificent shot and a perfect companion for hunters, literally accomplished miracles. He could steal up so perfectly that he grew out of the grass like a spectre some twenty paces from the astonished and petrified antelope. He could direct a panically fleeing drove of "sing-sings" and "sons" in any direction he pleased, driving them toward the marksmen.

Before my eyes, by imitating the voice of the black antelope,[4] Konan decoyed this fairly rare animal within range of a carbine. He could imitate the voices of various varieties of monkeys, and they would cautiously ap-

[4] *Cephalophus niger;* it has an acrid odour, owing to which the Negroes call this antelope "lofoni" (stinking).

proach, jumping and hiding in the tree-tops. Bustards, partridges and guinea-fowl ran towards the marksmen when Konan began to decoy them, using no instrument except a pithed nut. He could bark and moan like a jackal, laugh like a hyena, howl like a leopard or cheetah, hiss like an angry civet—in a word, he knew as well as the most powerful magician the secret and various speech of all the birds and animals of his native jungle.

He was an intrepid and at the same time a prudent and cautious hunter, who disliked senseless enterprises. He pursued lions single-handed, even such as came out on the road and refused to give way before the oncoming motor-car; and the maneless [5] lord of the savannah invariably fell to a bullet fired by Konan.

He knew all the wiles of the nocturnal bandit, the leopard, and on discovering its trail, returned at night to the house with the spotted skin of this wild cat.

Fleeing buffaloes had a terrible enemy in this Negro. He would watch them at graze, smiling as he observed their passionate enjoyment and their habit of furiously lashing their flanks with their tails. But when, scenting man, the buffaloes took to flight, Konan threw his carbine across his shoulder and ran almost without touching the earth with his feet. He could overtake and turn a buffalo in the desired direction, bringing it within range. No hunting dog, whether pointer or hound, could have been of more assistance to the hunter.

From its track Konan could tell not only the animal and its movements, but even its intentions. The faintest of trails could not escape his keen eyes; and when he

[5] The lions of western Africa have no manes.

lost it among loose boulders and shingle he snuffed, and went on without hesitation until he again found signs of the passing of the hunted prey on the softer earth.

Only once did the Negro come very near losing his life. He had shot a young chimpanzee, and when it tumbled out of the tree Konan found himself unexpectedly attacked by an infuriated female. The onslaught was so sudden that he did not even have time to recover himself before the chimpanzee had torn his carbine from his hands, and pressing him into the bushes, had seized the hunter by the throat. A good hour the stubborn struggle lasted, the advantage going first to the monkey, then to the man. The chimpanzee split Konan's nostril, bit off his ear and tore open his chest, yet the man emerged the victor owing to his superior mental development. Feeling himself weakening with weariness and loss of blood, Konan began imperceptibly to retreat towards the bushes where his carbine was lying, not relaxing the struggle for one moment. But the monkey quickly realized her opponent's intention, and began to drag him in the contrary direction. Summoning all his remaining strength, the Negro broke away from his aggressor, and snatching up the carbine, fired a shot which, as always, went straight to the mark.

Burger and Konan, both of them madly in love with the wild, exuberant nature of Africa, were powerfully and nobly conscious of its beauty. Konan, his eyes fixed on the last dying rays of the sun and on the pearly iridescence of the sky, would sit motionless, entirely preoccupied with the solemn moment of earth's valediction to the flaming star, feeling the lassitude of the trees, the water,

clouds and animals, as they awaited the fresh breeze of the evening wind and repose in the soft folds of the black cloak of night. The enraptured Negro sat like a bronze statue, holding his breath, listening intently to the quiet melody of the oncoming dusk; he whispered mysterious prayers as though to his household fetishes; but unconsciously he was carrying his supplication to more powerful gods, crying movingly to them with the ecstatic soul of a black man:

"O earth, our mother! O Sun, life and death giving!

"O Moon, consort of Earth! O Heaven, abode of the unknown power!"

Konan loved all his gods, and in their honour wore on his breast a bunch of amulets: the ends of antelopes' and rams' horns, sewn together with red leather and furnished with magical herbs and mysterious signs. Konan's gods were never left without offerings; for when their votary, the courageous hunter, killed an animal, he dipped his Hunting amulets in the blood of the fresh wound and whispered:

"This is for you, O gods, this outpoured blood! Grant that the bush may be always rich in animals and birds, that my fields may always yield an abundant harvest, that my wives and domestic cattle may be fruitful, that the fiery and the rainy days may arrive at the times wisely appointed by you, the gods! . . ."

Burger, a civilized and intelligent Frenchman, after his own fashion loved these very same gods. He was one of those happy and simultaneously tragic beings who have no strength or desire for a long residence in the teeming human ant-hills. He was a man who from

time to time felt the necessity of returning to primitive conditions, in which the sun and wind torment and caress the body, water and quaggy morasses are no obstacle to man, and the breast breathes freely under the black canopy of the nocturnal sky; when forces exhausted with the heat and a long march return with a vehement rush, renewed and invigorated; when the entire world, with its strongest experiences and sensations, is contained in the savannah and the forest, uncontaminated by the loathsome, terrible phenomena of man's invention; when life is all compact of dexterous movement, clear thought and profound feeling, and is not a convulsive agitation, a cruel and ruthless struggle carried on in a mist of human blood and sweat, in a dizzy whirl of conflicting ideals and tendencies.

We did not observe any traces of tears or yearning in our friend's eyes when we were living in the forest and on the savannah. They were lit up with the joy of life, his lips smiled serenely, his voice took on another tone, his freely breathing breast rose high, and not once in Burger's words did I catch any note of envy, dissatisfaction or disillusionment. On the savannah he was a man with healthy muscles and a healthy soul; but in the elegantly furnished colonial homes Burger's face went pale, his lips were drawn into puckers, a misty veil dropped over his merry eyes and he talked in a strained and artificial voice.

I did not ask Burger why this was so, for during hunting expeditions everything that belongs to the life of the swarming towns is left behind us. They are distinct, mutually exclusive, even hostile worlds. Then why

precipitate our return from this exuberant actuality, full of light, movement and freedom, to the realm of illusion and treachery which with shameless audacity calls itself "the life of civilized races"? We were happy enough as we were without introspective self-revelations and recollections!

In the company of Burger and Konan I hunted wild buffaloes.[6] The black buffalo [7] is not met with in western Africa, but its two varieties, the dark-grey and the brown buffalo, are found. The local hunters declare that cross-breeds of these two kinds have never been observed. Moreover, the dark-grey buffaloes never graze with their brown cousins.

I happened to come across muddy banks of rivers and streams trodden by wild buffaloes. In the soft earth, trampled and pitted with hundreds of tracks, I sometimes noticed deep holes. These were places where the buffaloes lie down and immerse themselves in the mud, in their unceasing struggle with parasites and horse-flies.

It is difficult to shoot a buffalo at these watering-places. The animals know that they are dangerous, for in the bush lions, leopards and cheetahs and sometimes a small herd of hyenas lie in wait for them. So they approach cautiously, sending scouts ahead to investigate the locality. After watering, the whole herd flees at a great gallop to the savannah, to open spots where it is easy to discern the enemy from afar. Here they feel safe; but it is here that the tracker can bring the hunter within range of them.

[6] *Bubulus pumilas.*
[7] *Bos caffer.*

However, the herd does not remain in one place while grazing. They move forward continually at quite a swift pace, pricking up their ears and lashing their flanks with their tails. With nervous movements they tear away the grass and nibble the leaves or young branches of the bushes. This continuous movement allows the animals to break at once into a run in the event of danger menacing them.

White herons flutter around them, dropping into the long grass, settling on the summits of the trees and on the animals' backs, pecking out parasites. An entomologist could gather important collections of insects and other tiny creatures by examining the buffalo's hide. Mosquitoes cling motionless, swollen with blood; huge "buffalo-flies," thrusting their two stings into their pain-maddened victim, slowly pass from spot to spot; red and yellow black-speckled ticks, large and horny like crabs, seek hairless parts of the body, and finding them on the belly and behind the ears, make their way into the living flesh, bore into the base of the horns, and even slip beneath the bone of the cranium, driving the animal to madness and frenzy.

This most frequently happens in the case of the old bulls, who have protuberant, rounded horns that cover the entire upper part of the head. The martyr will begin to run amok, flinging itself on other buffaloes, inflicting serious wounds on them, throwing itself against isolated trees and rocks, beating at them with its monstrous horns, and chasing antelopes, hyenas and jackals. Suffering more and more, it finally abandons the herd and becomes the solitary wanderer surrounded with the ter-

rible legends invented by hunters—legends which perhaps do not always have truth for their mother.

It is customarily declared that the solitary buffalo always attacks the hunter. I had a meeting almost eye to eye with two solitary buffaloes—one grey and one brown—and I do not consider that they were more dangerous and courageous than others. The solitary, like every other local wild buffalo, is a timid and cautious animal; and on seeing a man it makes off very swiftly at full gallop. If it is dangerously wounded it presses into the thicket and waits for the approaching hunter, attacking him with ungovernable fury.

We saw one such unfortunate hunter in Sinfra. Having wounded a buffalo, he followed it into the forest where the prey had hidden, but was immediately struck with the horns in the lower part of the abdomen and thrown into the air. The buffalo then hid itself in the forest. I doubt whether the man we saw could have recovered. To receive a blow from the horned forehead of a buffalo which, as certain travellers relate, can throw a horse and rider high into the air, is not a thing to suffer with impunity.

Occasionally a shot buffalo would fall as though dead, and the hunter would go boldly up to him, sitting on him or prodding him with the butt of his rifle. But, suddenly recovering consciousness, the sombre giant would spring up and attack, scattering panic among the hunters and trackers. We shot three buffaloes in the Ivory Coast, and each time prudent Konan approached the fallen animal with great caution, holding his carbine at the ready. However, the express bullets from our

firearms, which were of 9.3 and 10.75-mm. calibre, had acted certainly and with lightning effect.

A few minutes after the animal is killed the blood flowing from the wound begins to foam and bubble under the influence of the swiftly succeeding fermentation. The ticks and horse-flies abandon the dead body in panic; and at the scent of blood, colourful, frivolous butterflies flutter to the spot and begin voraciously to drink the blood, setting their mobile probosces to the wound as though it were the calyx of a scarlet flower.

If one happens to spend the night in the proximity of a dead buffalo one can hear continually the quiet and stealthy tread of hyenas and jackals; sometimes even a lion approaches, attracted by the easy prey. At dawn vultures flying up from afar begin to pule and huge eagles to chatter angrily. Only the most dangerous enemies, the termites and bacteria, remain undisclosed. The first succeed in sapping from under the ground and ruin the animal's hide; the others hasten the decomposition of the body and deprive the hunter of flavorous roast meat, entrées of the delicate buffalo lips, and boiled tongue with sharp pepper sauce.

Buffalo-shooting is a very pleasant sport, for it is in no way different from our European hunts after stags and elks. The hunter tracks the beast over the plain and can fire with a good sight of him, aiming at the chosen spot for the shot to have the desired result.

The savannah rejoices the eye and heart of the hunter with its greenness and the variety of its animals. The carités and pseudo-mahoganies welcome the weary hunter with their refreshing shade, and the thirsty

marksman can drink water from murmuring streams—which for that matter is not at all to be recommended. Together with the water one may gulp down a worm or bacteria and fall so seriously ill that the only salvation is either an immediate return to Europe or . . . a seat on the tree of ancestors, transformed into a nimble, invisible phantom.

On quite a different plane is hunting for hippopotami—for the "mali," which are recognized as "tabu" by the tribes of the sign Ma. A shot at an elephant is no easy task. The hunter must hit him between his hardly discernible eye and the continually restless ear, which resembles a great burdock, or else a third of an inch above the first fold of the trunk, on a direct line between the two eyes. These spots are always mortal, but in regard to others opinions differ, and as I personally have no experience of elephant-shooting I cannot express my own opinion.

A shot at the hippopotamus is a hundred times more difficult. To meet him on land, to have a good aim and to get in a dead shot is almost impossible, and so hunters seek him in the river. In exceptionally fortunate circumstances, as once happened to me, by quietly pushing through the dense, interwoven bank side undergrowth and lianas one can penetrate to the river, and unexpectedly come upon a herd of hippopotami on jutting stones or in the shallows. Usually they lie half immersed in the water, and setting their monstrous heads on their neighbours' backs, glittering in the sunlight, prick up their ears restlessly. The sun shines frenziedly, being reflected from the moving surface of the river and

forming a great quivering mist, seductive and deceptive; the heart beats so violently that the carbine trembles in the hand; perspiration momentarily veils the sight; mosquitoes and tse-tse flies sting on all sides; the feet sink in the mud or slide noisily over the stones. After the shot the herd throws itself with one leap into the water and swims, raising great waves which splash against the bank. The mortally stricken monster, sometimes weighing two tons, either sinks at once or swims, momently leaping like Neptune's charger, throwing out his bent forelegs like a galloping horse and leaving behind him a dispersing bloody trail.

But most frequently one has to shoot at a hippopotamus actually in the river. One can hear him a long way off! Every few minutes he thrusts out his enormous forehead, projecting only his eyes and nostrils from the surface of the water, and looking like a gigantic frog. With a noise and a splash the monster ejects the water from his lungs and throat; sometimes he yawns, bellowing with a deep, far-carrying voice. After a moment he immerses himself again, and the hunter must wait until he makes a further appearance. One never knows whether he will be nearer or farther when he emerges again, nor whether there will be time for a shot directed between his eyes.

The hunter always knows instinctively whether the bullet has been well placed, and so, untroubled on that score, he waits for the dead animal to float to the surface of the water. Again there is the problem of how long one has to wait. An hour, or two, or possibly a whole day? It is no unimportant question, for every minute

costs several drops of blood sucked out by mosquitoes and horse-flies. But no one, not even Konan himself, is able to give an answer to it. It will depend on the contents of the hippopotamus's stomach. If this "king of the stream" has not digested his considerable breakfast that day he will float up tardily; while if he has not been over-abstemious he will appear floating legs upwards, his stomach distended with fermenting food.

But it sometimes happens that the shot hippopotamus does not float up at all. He drags his enormous carcass among sunken stones or the boughs of submerged trees, and is lost for the hunter to the joy of the crocodile, who rends him to pieces without leaving a trace.

At night the hippopotami leave the river and make for pasturage, trampling deep trench tracks in the ground. After wallowing in the grass and shaking off the molluscs, leeches and various other parasites, the giant begets himself to work. For this he has a special instrument: his jaws, armed with eight projecting teeth, four crooked side tusks, molar teeth and a broad, rough tongue. A perfect mechanism! The fore-teeth are the forks with which the beast gathers a whole bunch of grass and tears it from the earth; his tongue is the transport implement which conveys the grass to the molars; finally, the side tusks serve for levering up trees, after the overthrow of which the hippopotamus feasts himself on the succulent young roots.

When going to or from the river the hippopotami visit places which they know to be abundant in salt or lime and lick the earth, in the course of time leaving behind them deep holes and trenches, complete "quarries"

sometimes six feet deep and fifteen broad. The natives usually set their ambushes in these spots, and kill the monsters by driving their spears into them or by firing at them from their flint-guns, which they load with pieces of old iron.

When a hippopotamus has been killed in the water it is no easy labour to drag the monstrous carcass to the bank. The Negroes, as watchful as vultures, perceive the hunter's success; and soon the entire population of the neighbouring villages—men, women and children—stand to the work with trays, calabashes and baskets. In the twinkling of an eye the natives remove and divide the hide, cut through the thick layer of fat, and opening a road to the interior of the carcass with their machetas, crawl in to drink greedily of the blood and to cut out the most tasty tit-bits—the liver and kidneys—baking them over a fire on the spot. The white hunter also gets his share: the head and one leg. After these somewhat disgusting operations, the European is revolted by the sight of the natives as they eat the pieces of raw meat left on the bones, and of the women carrying the meat and fat in baskets and streaming from head to foot with blood and grease. Meantime high under the clouds pule the vultures flying to the banquet, while hundreds of others have already settled in the neighbouring trees and wait impatiently for the departure of the human beings.

Only the difficulty of a shot at a hippopotamus justifies hunting after this peaceable and timorous giant. Even a whole herd will never attack a boat, and only when a female with a little hippopotamus on her back is attacked

by the hunter do the males fling themselves on their enemies, endeavouring to shatter the boat with their tusks or to overturn it.

However, this is becoming a more and more infrequent occurrence, for unfortunately hippopotami are steadily growing rarer in the rivers of western Africa. Occasionally one can still track down a small herd of the common hippopotami—*Hippopotamus amphibius*—but the other representative of this family, small [8] and of a dark hue—the Liberian hippopotamus—has been almost completely exterminated. At infrequent intervals one may see it in the deep, almost inaccessible bays of the rivers in northern Liberia and Lower Guinea, but these appear to be the last survivors of this rare animal.

We hunted a good deal on the savannah and in the forests belonging to the Guro tribe, who until recently were cannibals. Without doubt they still cling to this custom, but they conceal it in the depths of the gloomy forests, where before the French administration had established outposts they offered bloody sacrifices to the great divinity Gye and in honour of Earth, consuming the bodies of human beings slain on the altars dedicated to male and female gods.

From time to time the priests and magicians compelled the brave, good-natured Guro hunters to unite with the spirits of Earth. Then human victims fell under the knives of the priests, and blood flowed before the altars of the angered gods. However, other causes also led to the establishment of this bloody custom. The Guros

[8] The average weight is 7 to 9 cwt. Several specimens of the Liberian hippopotamus have been supplied to the Zoological Gardens in Hamburg and London.

being excellent, indefatigable hunters, they are experts on meat. They declare that human meat has the finest flavour of all.

The Europeans who told us of this spoke of the black cannibals with loathing and hatred. As I have spent a good deal of time with the Guros and have come to know these brave, honest people, I feel it incumbent on me to take up their defence. This idea entered my head while still in the forest jungle, in the neighbourhood of Sinfra, when, wearied by a long march in pursuit of elephants, I sat down and gazed at the small, well-formed bodies of the trackers. They stood before me dignified and calm, their keen eyes and white teeth gleaming. Suddenly I noticed that their teeth had a strange appearance. I studied them attentively, and observed that certain Guros have the front teeth sharpened into the form of acute triangles. Those Guros with triangular teeth wore a strange coiffure: long locks over the centre of the skull and two at the sides. These locks were heavily oiled and were carried upwards to form three horns.

"Why do the natives have such teeth and hair?" I asked Konan.

"They are hunter-warriors," the tracker answered with a condescending smile; for he regarded his own Baule tribe as superior to these tiny natives.

It seemed to me that through the haze of the vanished centuries I was beginning to see the road by which the Guros had come to cannibalism as an inseparable part of their cult, and even to the acknowledgment of human meat as the most tasty of food.

The aboriginal inhabitants of the black continent are

steadily disappearing, are becoming absorbed into the sea of immigrants of various hues, and only a few tribes are left who retain in their veins the pure blood of the former "sons of the soil." Among these are the Yola and Baga tribes of Guinea and the Guros of the Ivory Coast.

There is no record as to when these small, brave and indefatigable people first began to settle in Africa as far as the Niger, and possibly even farther to the north, to the confines of Algerian Tell. The Atlantides, the Asiatic invaders, emigrants from Egypt, and the Berbers dealt them heavy blows again and again, so the tribes of "the sons of the soil" withdrew more and more into the heart of the continent, abandoning their centres, the graves of their ancestors and the unburied bodies of their brothers fallen in battle.

However, it sometimes happened that these little warriors scattered the bands of invaders to the four winds, covering the field of battle with their enemies' bodies and taking numerous prisoners. With what hatred these hunted people flung themselves on the bodies, rent them, abused them, and in an outburst of revenge for the curse of wandering, for their lost earth, for the deprivation of their right to life, gnawed at the throats of the wounded with their teeth, drank their blood, tore out the hearts and livers and cut the corpses of their slain enemies to pieces!

The prisoners they handed to the victorious chieftains, but the latter could not keep them alive owing to the heavy conditions of their nomadic life, the swift flight before the enemy, and the continual struggle. So the

chieftains divided their prisoners among those who had distinguished themselves by exceptional bravery in battle. But these latter dragged them to the summit of an eminence, whence they could see more distinctly and farther to the north—to the region of their destroyed centres and the tombs of their fathers, and there they killed them.

As they put their enemies to death, they cried with faces turned in the direction of their lost fatherland:

"In revenge for the desecration of your dust, fathers near and distant, in revenge for our eviction from land tilled by your hands and watered with your sweat, in revenge for our suffering and misery, we pour out the blood of our enemies and yours!"

When their hatred and despair reached its height, the "sons of the soil" tore out the hearts of the prisoners, and gnawing them with their teeth, cried in sombre accents:

"With bloody tears we weep for the lost land of our fathers! May the blood of our enemies appease the pain in our hearts, O gods!"

But later, showing the crowd the heads of the invaders, they shook them and said expressively:

"Behold our enemy, the son of the panther-people, grandson of the hyena tribe, who killed the son of Ehi and Mulari, the son of Kassu and Ruhama, the son of Tsubel and Falaba! Take him and avenge the blood of our brothers, the valiant warriors!"

The infuriated throng flung themselves on the corpse, beat it with stone axes and transfixed it with spears and knives. Then the despairing mothers and defenceless

widows of the fallen Guros forced their way through to the remains. They rent asunder the bloody, livid body, they worried and gnawed at it with their teeth, and in their frenzy they devoured the torn-off fragments of meat.

Ages passed, but the "sons of the soil" retreated farther and farther; for fresh invaders arrived in the continent accursed by Ammo or Gye, hemming in its ancient inhabitants on the north, the east and the west, driving them into barren places, into the wilderness bristling with the restless waves of burning sands. . . . Hunger and thirst stared the little warriors in the eyes, and every enemy corpse, every prisoner, came to be regarded as meat, his flesh used for food, his blood for drink.

Nevertheless, the first claim to satisfaction of their hunger belonged to the bravest warriors, the defenders of the whole tribe, the men who went forth to death. They were given the honourable name of lions, and as a token of the lion they began to file their teeth into a triangular shape like the fangs of the beasts of prey. Others menacingly erected the hair on their heads. When hunger and misery reduced the retreating tribes to despair and insanity, the elders and chiefs established the custom of sacrificing the weakest members of the tribe, giving their blood to the gods and their bodies to their starving kinsmen. The elders and stern chieftains proclaimed an interdiction on the burial of the dead and fallen, ordering their bodies to be used for the nourishment of the warriors, the women and children.

These customs, born of a harsh necessity, were the genesis of cannibalism and necrophagy among these in-

censed and desperate tribes, who, hunted by the conquering and ruthless invaders, wandered for long ages, until they found a basis of resistance in the inaccessible forests.

"But we live in the twentieth century!" I hear someone exclaim. "What of Christianity, civilization, law, if these black barbarians are still cannibals as of old? It is a disgrace! The crime of crimes!" I have more than once heard such vacuous remarks uttered in highly indignant tones.

The man of primitive, naive and ignorant soul remains imprisoned in the fetters of tradition. The iron of those chains will not rust or crumble any more easily than any other "iron law," or than the morality of civilized people, hallowed as it is by respect for the majority.

We are speaking of Negroes, worshippers of fetishes and the obscure Ammo and Gye, but what of the Mongols of Attila, Ghengiz-Khan and Batou? What of the Confucian and Buddhist warriors of China and ancient Japan, the ancient Germans, Britons, Scandinavians and Slavs? Did they never make human sacrifices? Did they never cut off the heads of prisoners nor tear out their hearts? Did they never lop off the ears of their fallen opponents? Did the kings of the former Franks, Germans, Slavs and the valiant Vikings never drink from goblets made from the skulls of enemies? And what of their military signals sounded on a whistle made of a human bone? The civilized white races have forgotten these things, yet they were practised long after the African tribes began to withdraw from the north to the forests of the coast around the Gulf of Guinea.

For that withdrawal took place ages before the expulsion of the nomads Hyksos—"shepherd-kings" from Egypt during the seventeenth dynasty!

The proud, civilized white peoples should remember how long the ancient cults continued to exist within their society! In England and Ireland the Druids disappeared as Christianity spread over the country; but Druidism raised its head again and again, carrying on a long struggle with the followers of the Nazarene. And what is to be said of Julian the Apostate and the return to Greco-Roman paganism!

We are apt to forget that during wars, disasters, or starvation among the castaways of sunken ships, among prisoners fleeing from the French galleys and from Russian prisons, among gold-prospectors lost in the wilderness and in the mountains, outbreaks of cannibalism are almost the order of the day. As for paganism, it existed in Russia even in our day, side by side with the numerous temples of the Orthodox Church, and despite the attacks of priests, teachers and doctors. There the people offered official supplications in the state churches, and returned home to pray earnestly before the Chuvash, Mordvin and Cheremiss idols, or before a blasted oak dedicated to the old Slavonic Pierun.

It may be objected that this happened in Russia, in an incomprehensible country where possibilities and impossibilities, the real and the unreal, the highest knowledge and aesthetic as well as black magic, superstitions and infamies are all the children of one mother. So I will mention other things which are winked at and practised without reservation or reflection. The whites are so

afraid of the number thirteen that in many European hotels there are no rooms with this number. The same number was dreaded by the mediaeval astrologers, and they refused to use it in their horoscopes. Europeans swear by Beelzebub, but they forget that this is only the Babylonian and Phoenician Baalzebub, "the lord of poisonous flies," the god of Assur-bani-pal and the Sargonites. They resort to fortune-tellers for advice just as did the inhabitants of Assyrian Nineveh, the shepherds of the northern Gobi, the warriors of the Himalayas and the hunters along the Behring Sea! They have time-honoured customs and a very boisterous festival at harvest-time, and carnival revels and excesses; but they do not turn back the page of history, and they know not that the votaries of Demeter and Persephone did the same in their Agrarian cult, and that at these very seasons the naked pagan Bacchantes danced crowned with flowers, drunk with wine and lust. They are afraid of lonely hollow trees, of murderers' graves, of cemeteries and of deserted smithies; but they know not that these places are also dreaded by Arabs, Tuaregs and Negroes, who know that there the shades of ancestors and evil spirits or jinns have their abode. They believe that a horseshoe is lucky, but they have forgotten that it is because it has been forged by a smith, a haddad, a semi-magician. They touch wood when speaking of their health, but their black brother does the same—only he knows that the soul of his ancestor guardian has settled in the wood. They discuss reincarnation and the transmigration of souls, their occultists even know the heights to which they are trending; and the Brahmins

and Buddhists in India and the priests of Earth among the Mossi, Senufo, Ashantee and Guro tribes use the same language.

And are Europeans so very much better than cannibals, when their laws, their science, and their faith permit them to transfer to a sick, exhausted body the strong bones and skin of the healthy members of their community, and to make blood transfusions into their withered veins? They establish banks in order to live on the fat of the land, they make sacrifices of the bodies and the blood of their poorer brothers, they deprive them of consciousness and power of resistance by the poisonous stuffiness of their factories and mines, and macerate them with the cogs and rollers of their machines. And do the Negro magicians do any worse? Are not the cannibalism and the bloody sacrifices of Europeans still more monstrous, because they devour not only the bodies but with magnificent perfidy consume even the human souls, destroying their joy of life and their desire for existence?

No! We should have not contempt but sympathy for the black cannibals. It is for us to assist them and to convince them that the times have passed when the gods cried out for blood, and that now people call one another brother. Only then will the stone altars, imbrued in animal and human blood, and the wooden fetishes all be sent to the museums; and the white and black people will gaze at them with the same amazement and abhorrence as they feel towards terrible antediluvian monsters. But meantime. . . . meantime the Guros, and other Negroes also, here and there continue to practise canni-

balism, usually doing so under pressure from their magicians. But even if they do relish human meat it is not surprising, for over an endlessly long period of their tragic history they had time enough in which to come to like and appreciate its flavour. Nor do the natives at all conceal their liking. Some years ago, before motor-cars had penetrated to every part of the colony, one of the local officials had a wife of very obvious corpulence. When she rode on horseback the Negroes smacked their lips and shook their heads, muttering:

"Much, much meat is riding!"

In imagination they were already delighting in the flavour of this enormous quantity of meat. Nor was it only the men with triangular teeth and devilish horns on their heads who did so, but the women, old and young also, and even the most harmless coquettes among them, who paint white bands and rings on their faces to make themselves attractive and beautiful.

These women are amazing creatures!

While the Negro is a child intimidated by Nature, a slave of traditions and prejudices, yet still a man, that cannot be said of the women without some qualification. Their development is a hundred times more backward; they are still lacking in a number of ordinary human instincts.

The Negro woman has no clear conception of conjugal fidelity. She simply knows that she must not be unfaithful to her husband because he has the right to demand a divorce, and then her parents may refuse to receive their daughter into the house; or because, as is

the custom among the "nakompsas" of the Mossi tribe, she may be murdered. Besides, the magician may make a test of her virtue, and give her a poisonous extract of the "teli" to drink, or put corroding drops into her eyes, causing her to lose her sight or be ill for the rest of her life. But if none of these dangers menaces her the Negress betrays great levity in her habits; and as she greatly covets coloured stuffs and jewels, and also realizes the value of money, the virtue of the Negro women and maidens is left behind somewhere in the heart of the jungle.

In defence of the Negro women I must point out that in the native community infidelity is not a very great crime. Even the traditional laws do not lay down any punishment for the unfaithful, only demanding from the mistress the payment of a recompense to the injured husband. I was told that in one of the eastern provinces of the colony there is a chief who has several wives in every village, and makes an excellent profit on them by exacting payment for each infidelity. Such a state of things hardly makes for increased morality among women with an extremely primitive psychosis. The laxity of habits found among the women of certain tribes, as well as the astonishing levity of the laws relating to conjugal infidelity, are unquestionably to be regarded as the survivals of a former anarchist-communist social system with a recognized communal ownership of wives.

The Negro wives' relations with their husbands are hardly ever governed by affection. At first dominated by a natural, purely animal attraction, they later develop a simple calculating attitude. Nor are the Negro mothers

much better. They do not love their children, and they take pity on them not as beings dear to them, but as future workers who will contribute to the welfare of the family.

The governors and colonial officials adduced a number of instances in confirmation of this opinion. They have frequently seen a mother talking and gossipping in the calmest fashion when she was brought the head of her son who had been condemned to death by the court of elders. Negro mothers never weep at the funerals of their children. It is done for them by hired weepers. Cases have been known in which, after being divorced and returning the dowry and presents to her husband, the Negress demanded the custody of the children, which, according to the law, belong to the husband. An established rate of exchange exists, and for a child three months old the father usually demands two iron pots from the wife. The bargaining takes a long time, and very often the woman goes off, throwing the child to her former husband with the words, "Take him, then!"

In more than one district I was told of the following case: A seven-year-old lad had stolen several roots of yams from his neighbour, but was finally caught red-handed. The aggrieved Negro bound the lad and carried him into the forest, where he began to burn him slowly on a pyre. At the sound of the child's screams the whole village, including the parents of the unfortunate victim, came running.

"Pay me ten centimes for my stolen yams, and I'll release him!" the villager announced. But no one would

risk such a sum, and the Negro continued to torture the lad for several days until he died.

When the French authorities learnt of the boy's unnatural death an inquiry was instituted. But the offender was not discovered, for the villagers all held their tongues and refused to betray him. The terrified criminal promised to pay twenty-five francs to the murdered lad's parents, demanding in return that they should not proceed with the case. However, when the fruitless inquiry was dropped the murderer did not fulfil his promise; and only then did the injured parents charge him before the administrator with not paying the sum promised them, and the whole affair came to light.

These facts are truly of more terrible significance than cannibalism, for they do not allow of any other interpretation than that of the fearfully low development of the mind and nervous system of the Negro mothers and wives. When society possesses such women, can one dream of its swift spiritual advance? For these same mothers have the care of the younger generations in their hands, and they instil the most sombre customs, life-prejudices and principles into the minds of the children. Thus they have an enormous influence on the intellectual standards of their tribe.

The colonial authorities should turn their attention to the enlightenment of the Negro women, for as the champions of all tradition they are a hindrance to the advance of the black race, which, speaking generally, is capable not only of assimilating material civilization, but also of cultivating a mind at present asleep in their primitive brains.

An affronted or injured Negro sometimes has a very unusual manner of exacting vengeance. He commits a robbery and declares to the court that he stole in the name of the man who has injured him. The council of elders absolves him of responsibility, whereupon the law takes steps to prosecute the aggressor as a thief. A still more strange and sombre form of vengeance is for the affronted Negro to declare to his enemy in the presence of witnesses:

"Thou hast killed me!"

He then commits suicide, and the court charges his enemy with murder.

It is easy to understand what a great responsibility lies on the colonial officials. To try Negroes according to European law is often simply injurious nonsense, for it is incomprehensible to the natives and merely irritates them. When I reflected on the psychology of the black tribes I realized how sagacious are certain administrators, who never take the French criminal code out of their table drawer, but administer justice by their own methods and according to their own law. Usually the offenders are village chiefs who have not begun the cultivation of cocoa, banana and cotton plantations at the right time, have not selected the military levies, or have failed to collect the taxes.

Imprisonment is not at all a punishment for the Negro, compelled as he is to work and struggle for existence. In prison he receives food and even clothing without having to work. But a long imprisonment ruins his family, and merely arouses exasperation and hatred for the whites.

I was told that Burger had very ingenious, harmless and effective ways of punishing the chiefs of his district. He would confine them for two or three days in a cage together with fowls. The other Negroes would inspect the prisoners residing in the company of the astonished chickens, ducks and geese, and one after the other walk off smiling cunningly. He tied an offending chief for an hour to a tree on which a captive monkey was sitting. The friends and acquaintances of the chief were transported with laughter at the sight of the ape endeavouring to catch his uninvited neighbour by the hair or thrusting a dry branch into his ribs.

Once Burger was forced to give a severe lesson to a certain stubborn chief who was threatened with a long term of imprisonment for his misbehaviour. Summoning the chief, he ordered the soldiers to dress him in garments of fresh carité branches. When the fancy dress was finished and the chief stood attired in trousers and a cloak of leaves, with a tall green and odorous hat on his head, Burger in a serious tone ordered him to visit all the huts of his neighbours and to report on the number of goats in each enclosure. The chief had to execute the order, and soon was passing down the village street to the accompaniment of the roars, songs and whistles of the guffawing villagers. To complete his discomfiture, the goats—great connoisseurs of fresh carité leaves—took part in the proceedings. First they ate his trousers, and then, climbing on to his shoulders, they tore away the most succulent parts of this walking tree. After which masquerade it appears that the chief became the administrator's most diligent assistant.

Such were my Guro friends: amiable, pliable and hospitable. Together with them I visited a large area of their fertile savannahs, shooting buffaloes and antelopes, unsuccessfully but ardently pursuing the elephant, and with wide-open, observant eyes watching the life of the beasts, the birds, and the people; endeavouring to understand their souls, their cares and their joys, and seeking an explanation for all the amazing phenomena that arise out of the cult of the sombre and hopeless, such as were their mysterious destinies.

With the Guros I would sit on the banks of the Bandama watching the continually splashing fish, and listening with Konan's aid to their stories of the electric fish, which deprive human beings of consciousness and evoke a mystic fear among the natives; of the enormous prickly "captain," which reaches the dimensions of a full-grown man; of the crocodiles lurking in the water in wait for wild animals. The Guros declared that these bloodthirsty reptiles pulled down antelopes and boars, and sometimes were insolent enough to snap with their serrated jaws at the trunks of drinking elephants. The natives would frequently hear a maddened roar of pain from the giant wounded in his most sensitive spot, and on following the elephant's trail they always noticed blood.

The Guros showed me the round warrens of the green fly bored in the ground. It is a vicious hermit, and does not hesitate to attack the largest of spiders or even the poisonous spotted lizards, dragging the booty to its lair. Thanks also to my trackers I saw in the forests a flock of timorous and cautious blue guinea-hens (*Guttera*

cristata) of an ultra-marine hue, with a red spot on the front of the neck and a black tuft on the head.

From the banks of their river and from their emerald savannah the Guros conducted me to the virgin forest. We travelled from Sinfra along a road the edges of which Burger had had lined with "flamboyant" trees, now full-grown and covered with flowers flaming like little fires. But soon the picturesque road came to an end, and we drove into a dark tunnel. Great walls of enormous trees, screened from below by thickets of bushes, blossoming with white and scarlet flowers, laden with fruit and interlaced with lianas and prickly plants, at the height of a hundred and sixty feet united their exuberant branches and splendid green crowns to form a roof. Below, where a road had been cut through the brake, reigned the dusk and silence, broken from time to time by the chatter of monkeys and the shrieks of parrots. At rare intervals the jungle drew back from the road, and in its stead appeared the low and long huts of the Guros, fields of mandioc, maize and yams, or small plantations of cocoa and bananas. But the forest does not admit defeat and struggles on, throwing into these fields fresh bands of warriors—young trees that grow at an amazing speed.

Not even the Negroes can make their way through the tropical forests except at certain spots known to them. From time to time we observed gloomy side corridors running off into the jungle. These were the trails of elephants, and along them we pressed into the heart of the tangled, dusky forests. The hole-pitted tracks bristled with emerging roots like traps for the capture of

the striding monsters. Among the criss-crossed confusion of impressions and holes the trackers pointed out the trails of buffaloes, leopards, the rough zig-zag of the python, little holes pressed out by the sharp hoofs of the black antelope, and hundreds of others, like hieroglyphics of unknown writings left on one great memorandum page from the "book of the jungle."

"Look!" Konan exclaimed. "Here a 'khotoe' has passed recently, a large pangolin. He ought to be somewhere close. . . ."

We sought him among the branches of the trees, where he usually stays during the daytime, hanging and grappling with his talons, like a brown excrescence on the stout branches. As we examined the trees we were attacked by hordes of "manyan" ants on the march. The cruel little monsters had captured an ant-hill of black ants on their road, and had consumed some small animal, for they had left bleaching bones behind them. On meeting us they directed several divisions of warriors against us. In the struggle that followed I lost several drops of blood and suffered an ignominous defeat, for I had to save myself by flight from this black army making its way through the glade in an endless moving ribbon.

At the rear of this army Burger showed me the work of its engineers: scattered heaps of dry leaves and tunnels bored under obstacles that had proved insuperable. A little farther on we came across fugitives from the ant-hill destroyed by the "manyan" ants. The tiny black creatures were setting out into the world to seek a safer abode. They had managed to snatch up some of their

household possessions, for they were carrying little packets of provisions, still undeveloped larvae and some small sticks.

Heavily breathes the breast in the dusk of the jungle! The closeness and heat, the steam from the never-dried-up water in the small morasses, the rotting grass, branches and leaves, the caustic scent of large white centipedes and the sweat of the buffalo, the nauseating perfume of flowers carried from somewhere in the vicinity, stupefy and weary a man. No breath of fresh air ever penetrates hither!

The traveller is continually being bitten by mosquitoes and horse-flies, and from time to time large ticks, ants and spiders drop boldly on to one. Prickly lianas and the fine shoots of branches cling tightly like steel lines to the clothing and skin. A deathly silence reigns all around. Even the black and red monkeys pass through the crowns of the trees noiselessly, and the eagle perches on the dry top of mahogany-tree without its usual menacing chatter. On the powdering bark of fallen trees grow coloured toadstools; everywhere hang unknown fruits and berries. Snakes whip over the morasses and hide from us; something splashes in still, sombrous water. The pools are set in a frame of juicy canes which shoot exuberantly above a man's head and are speckled with crimson spots, caused by certain short, fat worms like cochineal insects.

Into this obscure jungle, oppressing with its stuffiness, heat and poisonous scents, we were led by the tracks of elephants. We were unable to get a shot at one of them, but I did not mind, for at least I became acquainted with

the jungle, mysterious and terrible in its age-old struggle of intensely exuberant life with the abrupt disappearance of dead beings, in the never-ceasing, apocalyptic struggle of the vegetation, of enormous animals and of tiny insects. And I heard the sound of fleeing elephants, the shrieks of the birds accompanying them, the crash of trampled canes, the splash of water and mud trodden by the monstrous feet of the giants . . . the last Mohicans of the antediluvian epoch of our earth.

We returned to Bauflé none too soon, for only a few day remained before the sailing of our boat. The hospitable M. Pernot gave us a splendid farewell banquet consisting of some extraordinary dishes:

Entrée of buffalo lips.
Buffalo soup.
Roast "captain" fish.
A leg of "son" antelope.
Roasts of peccary.
Fresh beans.
Cream from local cocoa.
Bananas, pineapples, mangoes and oranges.
Local coffee.

Zoölogists will be astonished to see the word "peccary," for this animal does not inhabit the African continent. And, indeed, it was not really a peccary, but the French colonists have given this name to a little animal which so far is without scientific classification. In the wild, rocky places of Africa one can meet with herds of little dark-brown animals about the size of large rabbits. Pallas, Oken, Cuvier and Peters have expressed quite contradictory opinions as to the family of this animal, and I think the question still remains unsettled. They are damans (*Hydra Abyssinicus*), much sought after by

connoisseurs of animal meat. The meat of the daman reminded me of the Asiatic marmot baked in ashes. They are also found in western Africa, and according to Brehm the animals, mentioned in the Bible—the "shaphen"—were not coneys, as the word is translated by Hebraists, but damans living in Syria and Palestine. The daman is a defenceless and timorous creature, taking to its rocky warrens for the flimsiest of reasons. At the same time, this cowardly little animal lives a neighbourly, communal existence with such apparently very dangerous creatures as the rapacious mongoose and the large agama lizard. I came across the daman in the rocks in the vicinity of Bamako and Bobo-Diulasso, and can confirm the fact that they are very . . . tasty.

The next morning after dinner we took our leave of the friendly M. Pernot and Burger, a man so much after my own heart, hoping that we too had not left unpleasant memories of our visit behind us in Bauflé.

It is my passionate desire to meet once more with Burger and Konan, to go out again with them on the trail of the elephant, to gaze at the miracle of Nature, to listen to the mysterious speech of the savannah and the jungle, following without a word the quiet course of our own serene, moving, and kindling thoughts. . . .

I was taught in my youth to transform my dreams into realities, and so. . . .

"Au revoir, Burger! Farewell, Konan, and see that unauthorized and unthinking criminals of big-game hunters do not exterminate all the elephants on the savannah between Bauflé, Daloa and Sinfra, and all the hippopotami in the Bandama. Au revoir, dear, kind friends!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

BLACK AND WHITE MAGICIANS

OUR train sped swiftly towards the ocean. The emerald savannahs disappeared completely. The lofty and sombre tropical forest stretched unbrokenly along the edge of the permanent way. Enormous two-hundred-feet mahogany-trees and iroko, tiama, ako, upas, badi, dabema, emien-lo, mekore, pri and samba [1] were mingled with smaller varieties of trees and dense bushes. From their towering summits hung leafy and flowering lianas and creeping plants. Here and there little streams or the rails of narrow-gauge timber railways emerged from the forest twilight. From time to time we noticed cleared glades in which were piles of enormous branches, protruding stumps and a brake of various kinds of bushes. In some of the clearings were sheds and the smoking traction-engines of travelling sawmills, with crowds of black labourers and Europeans in white helmets.

In spots where a year ago the forest had been cut down slender young trees with feathery leaves opening

[1] *Khaya ivorensis, Chlorofora excelsa, Entandrophragma, Antiaris toxicaria, Bridelia speciosa, Sarcocephalus Pobeguini, Piptadenia Africana, Alstonia congensis, Parki agboensis, Damoria Heckeli, Funtumia Africana, Triplochiton schleroxilon* (A. Chevalier's classification).

out like parasols shot upwards. It was the famous "umbrella-tree" (*Mussangha Smithi*), which grows with astonishing speed on cleared land. Until quite recently foresters regarded the mussangha as an injurious tree which smothered other, more valuable kinds. However, the specialists quickly changed their opinion. It is now known that the young mahoganies, tiama and iroko grow and get stronger in the shade of this tree, when otherwise they would be destroyed by the scorching sun. Thus the mussangha is the protector of those most valuable varieties of trees which form the colony's wealth. After twelve years it dies, fertilizing the soil with its body, nourishing the young forest aristocrats and making way for them—now strong and ready for the struggle to gain a free road heavenwards.

Technical research has also demonstrated that the umbrella-tree can be used for the manufacture of paper.

In the magnificent forests are hidden small, quite unknown settlements of completely savage forest tribes: the Beti and the Shiensi—the latter mixed with Guros—who are cannibals and eat both human and animal flesh. They are very primitive tribes, living on food provided by the forest: roots, wild fruits, nuts and palm wine. Meat is here a great rarity, for the natives only seldom succeed in killing an elephant or hippopotamus with their poisoned arrows. Born and dying in the dusk and fetor of the forest jungle, the Beti and Shiensi tribes remain mistrustful, savage and cruel. They recognize no authority whatever, and have no organized community. Among them magicians the most ignorant and frequently of a criminal character enjoy a great influence.

The destinies of these primitive and eldest sons of the African continent drove them before the invaders into the woods, into the gloom of the mighty forest; and so far no brighter light has ever penetrated their savage, sombre heads. I was told that they recognize exclusively the god of the forest, and fetishes as being magical objects which attract evil and good spirits and the shades of ancestors. The Beti tribe worship a living god also. It is the "ahua," or small black bear, found, it appears, only in this part of Africa. Possibly the "ahua" is not a bear, but a larger animal known to the French as the "lemur." The lemur is a small, dark-brown beast, in form somewhat like this small bear. It possesses large round eyes and astonishing paws, excellently adapted for clambering the boughs of trees. The lemur shown to us in Tiebussu by the administrator, M. Pacquet, had four toes on each of its fore-paws, with a hard and strong claw between the first and second of them, while on the hind-paws he had four toes and a wart like an undeveloped fifth toe. The lemur's ability to climb in different attitudes—on horizontal boughs hanging stomach upward and on perpendicular ones head downward —was astonishing. He walked up my stick as though it were the most convenient of steps; and when I reversed it he changed the direction of his body very dexterously and let himself down, staring at me rather angrily, revealing his sharp teeth and emitting a hissing noise.

I have been unable to discover to what family these animals belong. I think that "lemur" must be a local, unscientific name, just as is the case with the daman,

which is called "peccary"; the leopard, called "panther"; the crocodile, "caiman"; and the hornbill, "toucan." Only Dr. Ch. Maclaud [2] mentions the *lemurides*, describing their two varieties.[3] However, from his description I was not satisfied that the specimen at Tiebussu belonged to this family. My information concerning the "ahua" was confirmed by the governor of the colony.

Watching the mighty forests of the Ivory Coast, we arrived at Abidjean, where the railway suddenly turned off towards the bank of the large Ebrie lagoon. We transferred our baggage to a motor-lorry and sent it to Grand Bassam, whence it was to be shipped to Europe. But we travelled by car to Bingerville, to which town we had been invited by M. Maurice Lapalud, the governor of the Ivory Coast.

We set out at evening. The powerful headlights lit up the picturesque road winding through the tropical forest. The enormous trunks of trees formed the colonnades of an unknown, magnificent temple with vaulted roof lost in the sombre dusk. The trees were so thickly set that the light of the moon and stars could not penetrate through their leafy crowns. From time to time animals crossed the road—mongooses, palm squirrels and small rodents. Night birds and bats struck against the strong lenses of the lamps with their breasts and wings, incautiously pursuing the insects circling in the light. After an hour's ride we skirted a spacious stretch of turf and drew up before a splendid palace glimmering white against the ground of the dark palms.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.
[3] *Otolicnus senegalensis* and *Galago Demidoffi.*

Thanks to M. Lapalud's kindness, our last days in Africa were passed so pleasantly that they formed a delightful conclusion to our whole journey. We endeavoured to see everything we could, and the authorities for their part, having nothing to conceal from us, facilitated our task and lightened our labours and exertions arising out of our long and difficult expedition.

Bingerville, the headquarters of the governor and all the governmental offices of the colony, is inhabited solely by officials; there are a church, a post-office, a school and small workshops for the repair of the steamboats crossing the Ebrie lagoon. The three towns of the Ivory Coast, Abidjean, Bingerville and Grand Bassam, jointly fulfil important tasks. Bingerville is the directing brain and will of the colony, Abidjean is one hand gathering in the riches of the whole coast, Grand Bassam is another hand which passes on those riches to France and the world.

This second hand has a dangerous antagonist who endeavours to render it impotent with mighty blows. I refer to the "bar": to the never ceasing powerful billows which are born in the great depths of the Gulf of Guinea and drive towards its coast, where they abruptly meet with an obstacle in the form of shoals. The waves are broken against this unexpected barrier, and throw up enormous masses of water, sand and stone with terrible force. Before a mole reaching far into the sea was built, passengers were carried to the shore in large sloops and native canoes. The bar frequently carried them away, tossing and whirling them in its eddies, dashing them against the shoals, shattering the boat, carrying the

people down with it and engulfing them in its return. A number of graves in the local cemetery witness to the power and vengeance of the maned and frenzied billows which defend the coast of the continent against arrivals from other lands.

The first mole fell before the blows of the sea, and we saw its remains in Grand Bassam emerging like the bones of a skeleton from the continually whirling, tossing, foam-mantled ocean. A new mole, wisely planned and powerfully built, is resisting the frenzy of the billows; but when the "bar" strikes with its "ninth wave," the iron foundations and steel ties of the long breakwater tremble, rattle and groan.

The new breakwater ends where the calm, broad waves roll, before they reach the shoals or are broken against the submarine barrier into millions of frenzied, maned and bearded, iridescent spectres; there they do not bare their fangs, but bury them in the iron and wood of the mole; and no prey is seized and battered with their innumerable arms. The passengers are now transferred with the aid of cranes into small steam vessels which carry them to the ships anchoring in the open sea. Goods are transported in boats drawn by tugs; timber is thrown into the sea, bound with hawsers or chains, and then hauled to the side of the vessel. Loading in open sea is an expensive and unprofitable business.

Apart from this difficulty, Grand Bassam is absolutely choked with an incommensurable quantity of goods for export, and already is unable to cope with their dispatch. This situation has forced M. Lapalud to outline an extensive maritime plan, projected to cover a long period.

Abidjean, standing on the bank of the forty-feet-deep Ebrie lagoon, will shortly be connected with the sea by a canal four hundred yards wide, and so transformed into a port, to which ships will come directly from the Gulf of Guinea.

When the canal is finished the governor's residence will be transferred to Abidjean, while Bingerville will become a centre of practical knowledge. Here there will be an agricultural school, which in the present governor's park will possess an enormous forest of oil palms and plantations of cocoa and coffee, as well as phytological and selective laboratories. These will be directed by a first-class specialist, who is at present working with success on increasing the yield of the oil-palm fruit. The guiding principle of this research work is that of selection with a view to diminishing the oil-bearing kernel's fleshy internal tegument, which does not contain any oil.[4]

The next phase of development of the coastal ports will be the linking of the eastern Abi lagoon with the Ebrie lagoon by a canal. The colony will then possess an internal sea, over which will pass a traffic of small vessels carrying goods from the eastern extremity of the colony to Little Bassam, which is very accessible to vessels from the ocean.

When this plan has been carried out the neighbouring very picturesque, animated and at present rich little town of Grand Bassam will lose its significance as the most

[4] Experiments have given good results, but further selection has led, together with a diminution in the quantity of interior tegument, to a disappearance of the kernel, the part of the palm fruit most abundant in oil.

important port of the colony, and in time will probably disappear altogether.

When I accompanied the governor on a visit to Abidjean I realized that the eminent economic rôle destined for it is one for which the town is admirably suited. The well-planned and spacious town of Abidjean stands on a deep lagoon, which allows the approach of vessels to any point on the shore. On the bank many buildings suitable for warehouses are already standing, while the shore itself answers perfectly to the demands contingent on port services. At present the lagoon is crossed by a steam ferry which transports commercial tractors to the opposite bank, whence a road runs to Grand Bassam.

In Abidjean we looked over the French-Negro school and the hospital: a model of good arrangement, as a special commission of the League of Nations certified on visiting it. The pure air, the abundance of trees and flowers, the numerous well-maintained wards, and the up-to-date equipment do honour to the administration and the medical personnel. Seeing the results of treatment by the white doctors, the natives resort more and more willingly to the hospital. In 1924, 171,828 sick persons went to the hospitals in Abidjean, Grand Bassam and Buke for advice, a figure which constitutes a high percentage of the 1,143 Europeans and 1,670,000 natives in the colony. The hospitals have mainly to deal with small-pox, yellow fever brought from Sierre Leone, bacterial inflammation of the lungs, meningitis, leprosy, elephantiasis, tuberculosis, syphilis, "pian," malaria, dysentery, and so on. Cholera and plague have been completely overcome.

But our world is altogether too small. While visiting the hospital in Waghadugu I met Dr. Chardin, the former assistant of a friend of mine, Professor Diakon in Moscow. In Abidjean I met Dr. Uftiuzaninov, the brother of one of my pupils at the Polytechnic in Tomsk, where I was once a reader. The Russian revolution has scattered people all over the world.

Dr. Uftiuzaninov lives here with his wife and son. On this alien soil he does not feel at home; he is like the northern birch beside a coconut palm. They were all deeply moved on seeing me, whom they knew personally in former times.

Gazing at these people from frozen Siberia I realized the utter tragedy of both their personal and their national life, and heartily sympathized with them. I was greatly rejoiced by the governor's excellent opinion of Dr. Uftiuzaninov's capabilities.

Crossing the lagoon by the ferry,[5] we sped on to Grand Bassam by a perfectly kept road, in order to visit the port and to arrange formalities in regard to our passage to Europe by the vessel *Chad*.

We stood a long while on the breakwater, wrapped in the fresh sea-breeze. We watched the frenzy of the raging waves as they flew over the surface of the mole, and fell with a roar against the rock foundation hidden under the water and the thick bank of sand thrown up by the ocean. In the course of the ages the bar has heaped up great hills of sand, on which stand Great and Little Bassam, and these hills have partitioned off part of the gulf, thus forming the Ebrie, Abi, Lahu and

[5] A railway bridge is shortly to be thrown across the lagoon.

Fresco lagoons. With the passing of time the streams flowing into the lagoons have changed the taste of the water from salt to almost fresh, and in it even tortoises live, not to speak of fish common in the rivers of the coast. The lagoons are separated by broad stretches of sand overgrown with mangroves and raphia palms. Grand Bassam's neat little villas, surrounded with little gardens, are occupied by French, English and Americans, who dispatch mahogany, cotton and cocoa from the port, and exploit the forests. Here, too, live planters of pineapples, bananas, coffee and cocoa. An enormous profit is made out of this last article.

Among the cocoa-planters is a certain Negro—a former village chief—who was more than once punished for his unwillingness to cultivate this tree. But when he realized what was afoot he began to extend his plantations from year to year, being blessed at present by a real "visitation of God" with his income.

We returned to Bingerville by another road. We passed by villages and isolated native farms, with little palaces distinguished by colonnades and a strange ornamentation of the roofs and pediments. We were ferried across a lagoon one and a quarter miles wide, and gazed with rapture at the Southern Cross glittering in the sky, reflected with amazing clarity on the motionless black surface of the lagoon. When at times the good motor-road, the speeding car and the ferry were forgotten, the surrounding forest, the quiet lagoon, the profound heaven sown with stars spoke of the wild jungle, whence from time to time various animals ran out before the white, dazzling band of rays floating before us.

But on each occasion the governor brought me back to reality, as he explained to me his plan for the further development of his colony. At present he is working at the continuation of the existing railway from Abidjean to the ports of Great and Little Bassam, and from Buke to Bobo-Diulasso, Waghadugu and Sikasso. The next stages will comprise the running of a line from Buke to the frontier of Liberia for the purpose of exploiting the forest riches of the western provinces, and the connection by railway of the serviceable port of Sassandra with Daloa. Thence the railway will be projected in two directions, to Buke and to Kankan, towards the frontier of Guinea. Here the adjacent regions of the Ivory Coast are rich in cola, cotton and cocoa, while local conditions permit the establishment of various plantations, including the cultivation of the quinine-tree. Finally a third line is to connect the eastern provinces adjacent to the British Gold Coast with the main artery traversing the colony from south to north.

As I listened to the governor I was astonished at the scope and practicability of the plan outlined. Before my eyes unfolded a map of the entire colony criss-crossed with the iron roads of railways, with auxiliary motor-roads, and rivers with small, flat-bottomed vessels steaming over them, carrying the goods of the commercial enterprises and colonists.

The whole colony was transformed into a mosaic composed of large and small pieces of unequal forms, where there was no longer place either for savage tribes or for elephants, lions, hippopotami and leopards. Before me the ancient customs, legends, stories and cults were blown

away like morning mists or like dew beneath the rays of the rising sun; the enchanting romanticism vanished from this country of the Senufos, Agni, Ashantee Beti and innumerable other now-disappearing tribes who once were swept by the terrible invaders into the labyrinths and fastnesses of the jungle.

Lapalud will build railways to the frontiers of Liberia and Guinea, to Upper Volta, the Sudan and the Gold Coast; he will connect them with one another by steel clasps, and will destroy the romance as though it were a colony of malaria bacteria, perishing in stagnant, age-old morasses which have suddenly been intersected with deep trenches of running water.

Together with the romance lying behind the whole manner of the natives' life will disappear that splendid trait of white man's labour—heroism!

Swiftly, too, will disappear the "forest-men," those strange types who suddenly sense the command of their completely savage, cave-men ancestors, and abandon the village, the enclosure and the family to hide themselves in the inaccessible jungle. There they live on roots, wild honey and fruits, struggling with tooth and nail against the chimpanzees and leopards; and frightful, overgrown with long hair, covered with crusted clay and mud, they occasionally fall on the hunters who penetrate within the confines of their unrecognized realm.

After M. Lapalud's plan has been put into operation that will never happen again. Perhaps, as the promoter of civilization among the black tribes, the governor is glad of this, but simultaneously in the depths of his soul it should sadden him; for together with the forest-man,

the cannibal, the elephant and the lion, will pass into history the last representatives of those keen-witted governors and administrators with vehement wills and iron constitutions, whom I learnt to admire so sincerely during my travels. A new official type of governor and administrator will make his appearance in the colonies. I know not whether the change will be for the worse or for the better, but when it occurs I shall not travel to Africa again. . . . I meet with as many officials in Europe as mosquitoes in Africa. . . . They have no qualities to stimulate the heart, the mind or the imagination. . . .

No! If M. Lapalud wants me to pay another visit to his colony and to describe its beauty, its riches and its elemental vitality, let him retard a little the execution of his plan for civilizing the Ivory Coast. The plan is far-reaching and eminently sensible; the will animating it is magnificent in its power; but for me, a writer, wanderer and weaver of romances, the results of it all will be tragic! At every step I shall see the graves of the forest giants, from every mahogany-tree left standing will gaze at me mournfully the shades of the former white heroes, of black magicians, of kings dead centuries since, vainly seeking among the Negroes attired in coats, hats and patent boots the Betis and Ashantees of the ancient, traditional, romantic customs. Even the mighty but incomprehensible Gye himself will arise before me like a great question-mark; in his eyes I shall discern tears.

That will be a terrible moment! . . .

The governors, district administrators, engineers, agricultural inspectors and doctors themselves are unwittingly mighty white magicians. Without arms, with the

aid of science, will and worldly wisdom they are struggling against the cannibals and even against Gye himself, with his army of fetish "gre-gres." The antagonist has long been retreating before the power of the white magic, so the European magicians intend to subjugate the nature of the colony and the soul of its population.

They force the natives to work, and teach them agriculture and the art of accumulating and exploiting riches. They break farther and deeper into the heart of the jungle and link forgotten regions with the ports—the ports with France and with the whole world. Within a few years over the jungle will throb the aeroplane which left Marseilles the previous day; a fast train will speed through the savannahs and the mahogany forests, linking the Gulf of Guinea with Dakar in a two days' journey and carrying the Parisian to the ports of the Ivory Coast in seven days. Through the sandy expanses of the Sudan burning in the sun, through the soil of Upper Volta cracking with the heat of the burdensome day, the white magicians will cut canals, will force the people to forget the parched, yellow-brown bush, will mollify the unbearable heat of the sun which destroys will-power and strength; they will throw concrete roads across the termite fields, and will replace the undergrowth of wild grasses by plantations of pea-nuts, cotton or agava. They will conquer, setting the seal to the tragic book of the martyrdom of the forest tribes and of those who drove them into the bush, who fought under the emblem of the Hittite goddess Ma and the symbols of the Serpent and the Bird brought from Egypt.

The Negroes say that the white man is irresistible, be-

cause he is aided by wind, water and fire, the embodiment of which is the motor-car. In the motor-car flickers the electric spark, and therefore fire; into the tyres is pumped air, which occasionally bursts out with the force of wind; into the radiators is poured water, which emerges in the form of vapour. Who can overcome such a power? The conjurations of the priests and magicians are of no avail; the poisoned arrows and the poisonous beverages made from "teli" bark do not restrain him.

However, when the black people become convinced that the newcomers command the wings of the most powerful and fleet of the bird-monsters; that they have wrested the lightnings from the hands of Jove, Ammon, Baal, Teshub and Pierun; have possessed themselves of the mysteries appertaining to the most magnificent and jealous of the hidden gods; that they intersect the ocean above the water and below the water; that they can tear their way for miles into the breast of earth, the good goddess Tenga; that they have annihilated the conception of space and have rendered impotent the god of bloody war by the tyranny of new inventions, then they will silently yield to the will of the great pale-faced magicians, and will begin to learn from them the pride and Promethean power which alone is the mother of freedom.

I found great seething and pulsing laboratories of civilizing alchemy in all the colonies I visited, and with every year new and steadily more numerous hosts of black proselytes come to the white masters and to the initiated—with thoughts and dreams hidden behind the

veil of the pupils glittering with the lustre of black agate.

The attempts to create international homunculi from the blood and flesh of the black people and the tabloidal extract of the knowledge, morality and law of the white races—the chemical experiments being carried out in the crucible of idealism—have failed of positive results both in the United States and in Liberia. The homunculus has proved to be an incomplete creation, with the soul of a pagan black man despite the most fervid demonstrations of Christian piety, remaining a naive grown-up child even after drinking down large draughts of modern knowledge. He is a creation with merely the integument of civilized society: a tenuous integument formed from the most suburban and superficial of ideological elements.

I consider that the homunculus created in the laboratory has all the characteristics of the modern semi-educated man, with his few inherent qualifications and large demands arising out of an exaggerated idea of his rights and a low understanding of his obligations. Neither the black homunculus nor the half-educated European is to blame for this, for both are the product of a violent biological process; but given their normal development in the future the basic individual element will predominate: in the civilized Negro, the black blood of the pagan and the former slave; in the half-educated European, his uncrystallized soul composed of jumbled, heterogeneous ingredients.

Generations of men born and living in conditions of equality with the majority of society must pass away before the stimuli of progress—the hopes of achieving

an essential moral and psychical equality and an amicable relation with higher social strata—can come into operation. Those hopes will render impossible the periodical outbreaks of race and class hatred which occur when to the surface of life emerge the basic inherited characteristics of the homunculi. But an artificial creation cannot become a member of civilized society, even as Liberia, despite the lofty slogan of this Negro republic, has failed to take any place in the ranks of modern states.

The work of civilizing the Negroes must be carried on amid natural climatic and ethnographic conditions, for from them it will derive its strength and on them must be based any plans for its activities—activities which must have a distinctive character in almost every corner of the black continent.

On the other hand, in the process of becoming civilized the Negroes will have two natural roads of advance. The one lies by way of thrusting themselves above the level of their primitive community, the other by moulding themselves on the pattern of the civilizing races. This second possibility puts a heavy responsibility on any white race that endeavours to raise the intellectual development and the moral level of the black tribes.

Meantime, unfortunately, the recognition by the whites of this responsibility is not always and everywhere to be observed! More than once I have heard representatives of the coloured races of various continents say that Christ's teaching of love is merely a cloak for rights dependent on brute force for their maintenance. One very intelligent Negro, whom I met some

years ago in New York, declared with hatred and contempt in his voice that to the colonized countries the white race brought . . . syphilization.

The laboratory crucible has been abandoned by the white alchemists of civilization, and the process begun in it is now developing under the actual conditions prevailing in one or another community which is always alien and hostile to the homunculus.

I know not who is the originator of another equally unfortunate conception; the creation of a strange, tragic being, the product of crossing the unwitting white criminal with the black woman, dark as night, who as yet has no knowledge of love. Such beings are the mulattoes: actors in a continuous drama, which has contempt for its author and hatred for its producer.

I have already in this book written at large of the mulattoes, so I will only add that it is not they who will be the spreaders of civilization among their half-relations, and not they who will join the ranks of the white magicians who are intelligently and cautiously preparing the ground for the noble rivalry of the black tribes, until they gather impetus and enter into a cultural struggle with the white race for the right of unconditional equality.

As I thought of the great effort of the governor sitting at my side, by establishing schools and hospitals and bringing the savage tribes close to the heart of a most splendid civilization and culture, I suddenly saw the black wall of jungle, like a jealous bulwark guarding a great mystery from the sight of the uninitiated. With the eyes of my imagination, with eyes penetrating into

the dusky depths of vanished epochs, into the abyss of oceans and interplanetary space, into the secret recesses of unresolved enigmas, into the labyrinth of human souls and into the essence of the powers of heaven, I fixed my gaze on the black, unyielding fortress. Suddenly the lofty columns and the thronging canopy of the roof yielded submissively, withdrawing and unveiling the heart of the jungle.

I observed distinctly in the bush the rare settlements of the savage, sombre Beti and Brikolo, who never emerge from their forest. I saw the phantoms of former leaders and high-priests of the tribe, the shades of distant ancestors who from generation to generation wandered from the Mediterranean Sea to these inscrutable forests. I perceived many blood-sprinkled fetishes, carved from the heart of the mahogany and from the bark of the ill-boding "teli."

In the shade of a forest glade, far from populous centres, arose before my eyes the indistinct forms of five men and a woman. The eldest, with a face cruel and proud, glanced at the luminous Southern Cross and said in a sombre tone:

"I have commanded you to become panthers, athirst for blood. . . ."

They were silent, gazing at the ground.

"Are you prepared?" He snapped out the curt, impatient question.

"Let Agnebia speak; he knows!" answered one of the seated Betis.

"Mahi Bre has said well!" answered Agnebia. "I have prepared all, for so thou hast commanded, Boa

Niandre. For thou art our leader, the leader of the magicians!"

He drew out a ball wrapped in a leaf, and moulded from ground bones and digested food taken from a panther's intestines. "From the moment when we anoint our bodies with this fetish we shall be as panthers, and our eyes shall change the people indicated by Boa Niandre into antelopes whom we shall bite through the throat as our leader has commanded," said Agnebia, sombrely gazing into the pupils of the others.

After a moment the men began to rub their bodies with the loathsome, fetid ointment.

"And thou?" Agnebia snapped, staring at the woman.

"Leave her in peace!" Boa Niandre said menacingly. "Pali Lobre knows what she has to do. . . ." They finished their anointing. A silence fell.

At last Boa Niandre spoke:

"We must kill Niusako Gubero, the chief of our village, for he has prevented me, your leader, from becoming chief. We shall kill Boa Ipo, Boa Yfo, Niandre Boa's son and Bli Seri! We shall murder the women, Uamia, Duamu, Geza, Noihuti, Baida and the young maidens Yaba and Mokei! The elders we shall kill because they mocked at me and you, my comrades; and the young . . . the young because they have sweet meat! It will give us new strength, as our forefathers taught us and as the Beti have forgotten, fearing the vengeance of the accursed white invaders. . . . When we do this, the old customs uniting us with the gods will revive, and the glory of the warriors of our tribe will shine forth again."

"Thou hast commanded, O leader!" the panther-magicians exclaimed, brandishing their knives.

"Go!" Boa Niandre commanded. "After the execution of the deed we shall meet again on the track leading to Ladau! . . ."

I see the terrible, criminal men circling around Babairu, Gimeyo and Ladau; I see the blood of the people indicated by Boa Niandre poured out from time to time. I see the magicians seated by the fire in a glade hidden from human eyes; over a cauldron bends the form of the beldam Pali Lobre, as terrible as a witch, preparing food—food of human flesh. My whole body shudders, for I observe how avidly the human-panthers devour the hearts and bodies of their victims; I see them throw away the bones and the unpalatable arms and hands of the older people. They laugh in their savage, ominous delight; and, satiated, drink palm wine, singing with sombre voices at the funeral banquet to the devoured and . . . to themselves.

Through the haze of intervening space glimmers Sassandra and the excited crowd of natives standing before the administrator, laying complaint that during two years Boa Niandre and five other magicians have as panthers murdered and devoured eleven villagers and seven women.

From the obscurity of the jungle emerges before me the hall of judgment. The judges—the French administrator and three Negroes—hear the witnesses and the confessions of the accused. They make no denial and they hide nothing.

"I killed because Boa Niandre commanded me to be a

panther, and Agnebia gave me a magical anointment. . . . I killed and ate . . . I enjoyed the sweet meat. . . . Now I am sorry . . ." come the answers of the men-magicians and murderers.

"I killed and ate the meat of my victims! I pointed out those people on whom I wished to revenge myself . . . or those whose flesh was sweet . . ." confesses the leader of the magicians.

Only old Pali Lobre speaks differently. "I did not kill. . . . I prepared the food from the meat of those killed by Boa Niandre and his comrades. . . . I do not regret what I did, for I ate sweet meat and obeyed the command of Boa Niandre . . . my lover. . . ."

A long silence falls over the hall. The judges weigh in their hearts and minds the case of the magicians.

"What do you think, fellow-judges, of the deeds of these people?" the administrator asks.

The first to answer is grey-headed Zie:

"Boa Niandre does not possess the authority of a magician. . . . He is a wicked man, and must be punished as a murderer. The others also. . . ."

Then speaks the grave and prudent Dagba:

"If these people had been magicians they would have executed their deed 'in the shade' before the altars of the fetishes, and they would not regret their act. But they are criminals, and as criminals must receive a just sentence."

The secretary, Mori Keita, nods his head and announces:

"The judges speak according to the traditional law existing among the Betis. They judge justly. . . ."

Again the columns of trees flee farther and farther, drawing aside. I see a small grove close to Subra; I descry stakes, with Boa Niandre, the old hag Pali Lobre, and the four magician criminals bound to them. . . . Before them stands a squad of black riflemen. . . .

The glitter of barrels. . . . Smoke. . . . A volley of shots. . . .[6]

Startled, the far and near columns of trees tremble and press to the very edge of the road, close compactly one against another, are frozen into an immobile might of wall concealing the crimes of gods and men. . . .

The lights of the governor's palace windows shine before us; obliging shaushes[7] run to meet our car. The guard presents arms to M. Lapalud. . . . Supper . . . a table decked with flowers . . . white tropical attire, redolent of cleanliness . . . excellent dishes . . . wine . . . ice in a crystal vase. . . . How different is all this from that dark jungle and that life of the forest tribes, secretive in their crimes in honour of Tengi, of the fetishes, of the shades of ancestors, and terrible in their sombre and repulsive human crimes!

Next morning the jungle and its life again appeared before my eyes. . . . It was before sunrise. . . . We were riding along the shore of a lagoon. In its shade the cleared jungle hid rich plantations of cocoa and coffee, malachite, banana-trees laden with bunches of green, unripe fruit, and gardens with beds of pineapples, tobacco and vegetables. The small houses of the owners

[6] Such a case actually occurred with all the details described, and even the same names, in the Sassandra Court, July 17, 1920, as a certain official who sailed with us to Europe informed us.

[7] Orderlies—in Morocco and Algeria.

and overseers of the plantations stood under the dark canopies of orange, advocate and mango-trees. Behind the quickset hedges hid the coloured calyces of flowers, and bushes raised aloft their slender, juicy, aromatic shoots.

The narrow and shady road suddenly ran out into an open spot. It was the verge of the high, precipitous bank. The dark-red rocks ran in several waves like congealed cascades of once-molten metal down to the shore, which was overgrown with trees and with a tangled brake of shrubs, and chequered with patches of flowering plants. But they could not hide the wounds and scars left from former struggles.

Rent, eroded and jagged, full of crevices, caves and deep ravines, these rocks once raised their stony breast and withstood the frenzied course of the ocean billows as they boiled and tossed with hissing foam to their very summits, and beat with a roar and a bellow against the unconquerable armour of the lofty coast.

These red rocks remember those times as they gaze at their breast covered with the scars of old wounds. They sigh with the murmur of the trees, for they yearn for that struggle with the ocean, for the great, exuberant gladness of the fight; and they recall the time when the billows drew back before the invincible adamant of the rocky breast and fenced themselves off from it by a sandy rampart, leaving behind them the waves fallen in the battle to form a lagoon.

With a last effort it creeps to the foot of the ancient rocks to throw its warrior hordes against them; but it no longer has the strength to reach even to the lowest leaps

of the stony, serrated declivities, so it humbly licks the sands of the shore.

The mirror of the lagoon is smooth, unruffled by a single furrow. It reflects the golden shield of the sun and the lifeless, pallid features of the moon; over it slowly march the processions of cloudlets wandering through heaven and the menacing clouds portending the approaching tornado; it swells with the serene azure of the sky or the ominous scarlet of the uneasily setting sun. Only rarely does a sportive fish splash somewhere in the deeply indented bays, the rainbow kingfisher caresses the water with its breast, a lamenting gull drops like a white flower. From beyond a green islet a slender, frail canoe emerges, and the black fisherman standing in it casts his circular net like a bronze discobolus, raising bejewelled water-spurts which glitter in the sun.

Here reigns a dead silence, broken maybe only by the complaints of the gulls and the chatter of the black and white eagle. As everywhere in the jungle, life flows along its own channel here, right under the walls of the three large, populous and tumultuous towns. On several islands and prominent capes graze herds of buffaloes and antelopes, and in the brake a spotted beast of prey, the leopard, lurks for them.

Here and there pillars of smoke arise above the green crowns of the trees and the feathery canopies of the palms. In those spots are burning the fires of numerous tribes; and around them drags the life of the natives, with their age-old faith inherited from father to son, with customs more ancient than the pyramids, with a law not always understood and never and nowhere put

into writing. So far no one has pried there, for there is almost no access to those tiny, overgrown islets and to the jungle which has captured the low, narrow belt of sand between the lagoon and the ocean. The sea tosses on the southern verge of this sandy bar, endeavouring to break through it with its billows, but it is a fruitless effort, an impotent frenzy.

There, from the south, into the mouldering harbours of the black race press other waves—the waves of white peoples. Their power is incommensurable. They have already eaten out a broad bay, throwing down the walls and flowing over the whole land in tempestuous torrents which destroy all barriers. The lagoon has not yet come to know the power of the white waves; it rests quiet and still, mortally weakened, dreaming of its long past times of struggle, victories, and great suffering—dreaming its last dream, now nearing its end. . . .

Next morning we sadly pressed Lapalud's energetic hand and sailed by the large steamship *Chad* to Europe.

We pass by the shores of the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone. . . . In the distance emerges the green island of Los and picturesque Konakry. . . . Again the boundless ocean . . . mews . . . dolphins . . . noisy Dakar . . . mighty Cape Verde, untiring in its struggle with the waves. . . . The misty, yellowish-red dunes of the Mauritanian coast. . . . The distant, slanting sails of fisher feluccas . . . the familiar breath of the Sahara. . . .

And suddenly . . . a long since forgotten, colder puff of wind. . . . The tropic of Cancer is left behind us. . . . We doff our helmets, the symbols of sunny slavery. . . . The sight, gazing through a mist of moving memo-

ries, turns back to where the Southern Cross burning above the jungle hourly grows dimmer.

* * * * *

The Black Continent—the strange, inscrutable, enigmatic Black Continent—was left behind us.

For thousands and millions of years the great flaming star of the sun has belched forth its lava of maddening rays over that country. In its golden, fiery flood have been moulded the peoples, the Fish, Serpents, Birds, and the forest jungle. By various known and unknown roads have they wandered to the parched plain and to the sombre forests—victors and vanquished, aggressors and injured! Various divinities and various priests have directed the life of these peoples, but all have submitted to the power of the Sun and have recognized it as a terrible, merciless god. The god demanded monstrous hecatombs. . . . On its altar of Earth peoples and tribes yielded their powers, their joy of existence, their will and stubborn spirit fitted for aspiration and struggle. They became slaves of the Sun. It forged on them burning fetters, scourged them with millions of fiery whips, cut them down with a flaming sword . . . for long ages and for whole epochs. . . .

Humbly, without liberty and without spirit, the slaves existed from day to day, death as happiness esteeming. The slavish soul could no longer find within itself the power to resist the crimes of the white men coming from the sea, when they committed violence and lawlessness in the land, and when, fettering the arms and legs of black wives and husbands with irons, they dragged

them off to unknown countries, to a new misery, to infamy, to death. Powerful were the fetters of the Sun which corroded the human souls, for its slaves died in exile without a murmur, without a groan of despair, without a scream of hatred. . . .

The sun shed poisonous rays, for they crept into the hearts and souls of the white invaders, dried up all feeling of compassion and love within them, poisoned and cauterized the memory of Christ's commands, and transformed His servants and followers into murderers and executioners. . . .

Again centuries of ignominy and torture dragged by, until the day arrived when a great flame of shame and desire for justice blazed up in the souls of the white men. The erstwhile executioners came to the black slaves of the Sun groaning in their chains, and cried to them with a great voice:

"We bring you the insurrectionary desire of liberty and the life-giving slogan of emancipation! Arise! Shatter your chains!"

And liberty shone forth above the black people in a foreign country.

Later they were flung with this slogan back on to their native earth; but the sun stifled the cry of revolt and burnt out the desire for liberty, as it burnt up the grass of the jungle. Poisoning with its heat, the Sun-God scattered madness among the black peoples, to incite them to end their existence with their own hands. . . .

The white peoples arrived once more. With them came injustice, crime, exploitation, and tyrannies born from the poison of the sun; but once more an aroused

conscience and powerful will prevailed. The newcomers from the north stretched out their hands horny with existential struggle, and began to rend the sunny fetters from their black brothers with their weak, simple, primitive souls. Now by a hard, stony road they are leading them to victory over the sun, wresting unknown harvests from the earth, destroying the diseases sown by evil spirits, constraining the barren desert to become fruitful, linking distant and hostile tribes and summoning the black peoples to the splendid banquet of knowledge, with its dreams of happiness. The slaves step slowly, wearily, mistrustful and apathetic, with difficulty casting off the shackles of the sun.

The white man—that restless spirit—falling at times beneath the blows of the sun, tossing in the sultry fetor of a hostile country, feeling the weakening circulation of his envenomed blood and the flagging of his mortally tormented heart, frequently with a last effort of will imprints on the black soil and in the darkened intellects of her swarthy sons the passionate words:

"Come ye all unto me—ye vestiges of legendary Lemuria, ye shepherd-kings, ye peoples with red skin and the sign of the Serpent, and ye spectres of the forest glooms. Come ye unto me, unto me! I am liberty; I am revolt against the shackles; I am—victory! Whether ye be the descendants of the magi-Atlantides or the sons of the fratricide Cain, I give you all power, courage and the desire for revolt, that ye may overthrow the tyrannous Sun-God and force it into your service to the end of the ages!"

The slaves of the Sun are raising their heads, and

with hearts still troubled with alarm they listen to these insurgent words.

But ye, white peoples, who scatter bold promises in the various tongues of your fathers, so act that the proud slogan of the Titan-Prometheus shall become the slogan of freedom for the body and the soul of Man!

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